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CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION (REVISED).
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BASING ITS WORK ON INVESTIGATION OF SCHOOL PRACTICES AND ANALYSIS OF THE WRITING PROCESS OF CHILDREN, THE NORTHWESTERN CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER DEVELOPED A CURRICULUM IN COMPOSITION FOR THE LOWER SECONDARY GRADES. THE LESSONS DEVELOPED FOR THE SEVENTH AND EIGHTH GRADES HAD THEIR BASIS IN PESTALOZZIAN OBJECT TEACHING WHICH STRESSES SPECIFICITY AND CONCRETENESS. IN THE NINTH- AND TENTH-GRADE LESSONS, OBSERVATION WAS EXTENDED TO REFLECTION. THESE PRINCIPLES WERE ALSO THE BASIS FOR THE FORMULATION OF SPECIAL SETS OF LESSONS FOR USE WITH DISADVANTAGED FOURTH-GRADE CHILDREN. THROUGHOUT, THE LESSONS WERE PLANNED AS ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE VARIOUS STAGES OF THE WRITING PROCESS, ESPECIALLY THOSE PRIOR TO THE ACTUAL WRITING DOWN OF WORDS. OBSERVATION AND TESTIMONY SUGGESTED THAT THIS APPROACH LEADS CHILDREN INTO MAKING WRITING A MEANINGFUL PART OF THEIR EXPERIENCE. INCLUDED IN THE REPORT WERE THE ORGANIZATIONAL FORMAT OF THE CURRICULUM CENTER, A VISITATION CALENDAR, CURRICULUM CENTER BULLETINS, LISTS OF COOPERATING SCHOOLS AND PERSONNEL, AND REPORTS ON RELATED PROJECTS OF THE CENTER. (GD)

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FINAL REPORT
Project No. H-003
Contract No. OEC 2-10-114

CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION (REVISED)

March 31, 1967

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HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE

Office of Education
Bureau of Research

CURRICULUM STUDY CENTER IN ENGLISH COMPOSITION (REVISED).

Project No. H-003
Contract No. OEC 2-10-114

Wallace W. Douglas

March 31, 1967

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Evanston, Illinois

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PAGE

I. INTRODUCTION 1

i Preface 1

ii Background 2

II. PROCEDURE 11

III. TESTING PROGRAM AND RESULTS 23

Illustrations:

Figure 1 "Thanksgiving" 31

Figure 2 "Thanksgiving 1965" 32

Figure 3 "Thanksgiving" 33

Figure 4 "Thanksgiving - 1965" 34

Figure 5a "Thanksgiving 1965" 35
5b (Continued) 36

IV. SUMMARY 37

APPENDIX I: Organization of the Curriculum Center in English 38

APPENDIX II: Visitation Calendar and Curriculum Center Bulletins 43

APPENDIX III: Cooperating Schools and Personnel Informal Testing Basic Lessons, Fall 1964 . . 62

APPENDIX IV: Niles Township Project: Directions for Testing and Research Report 65

Tables:

Table I Distribution of Sample 75

Table II Variable I: Errors/100 Words, Distribution by Grades 81

Table III Variable I: Errors/100 Words Distribution by Grades and Ability Groups . . 83

Table IV Variables II, III, & IV: First, Second, and Third Person Pronouns/100 Words, Distribution by Grades 86

Table V Variables II, III, & IV: First, Second, and Third Person Pronouns/100 Words, Distribution by Grades and Ability Groups . . 87

Table VI Variables V, VI, & VII: Descriptive Adjectives, Qualifiers, and Adverbs/100 Words Distribution by Grades 92

Table VII Variables V, VI, & VII: Descriptive Adjectives, Qualifiers, and Adverbs/100 Words 93

Table VIII Variables VIII, IX, & X: Nominal Verbal Phrases, Verbal Modifier Phrases, and Prepositional Phrases/10 Clauses, Distribution by Grades 96

Table IX Variables VIII, IX, & X: Nominal Verbal Phrases, Adjectival Verbal Phrases, Prepositional Phrases, Distribution by Grades and Groups 98

Table X Variable XI: Subordinate Clauses, Distribution by Grades 100

Table XI Variable XI: Subordinate Clauses, Distribution by Grades and Ability Groups . . 101

Table XII Regression Analysis 104

APPENDIX V: Teaching Composition to Culturally Disadvantaged Elementary School Students: A Report of Research Conducted Jointly by Northwestern University and The Chicago Board of Education, August 1966 109

APPENDIX VI: A Report of Research Conducted Jointly by Northwestern University and the Oak Park Junior High School Language Arts Committee, March 1967 121

Table I Distribution of Sample 125

Table II Reader Reliabilities 126

Table III Statistical Chart 127

APPENDIX VII: Teaching Composition in the Secondary School: A Report of Research Conducted by Northwestern University and The Chicago Board of Education, January 1967 128

Table I Distribution of Sample 131

Table II Reader Reliabilities 132

Table IIIa Statistical Chart 133

Table IIIb Statistical Chart 134

Table IIIc Statistical Chart 135

APPENDIX VIII: Evanston Township High School Grammar Project, Minutes of Evaluation Meetings, February 16 and 17, 1966 136

Staff of the Northwestern Curriculum Study Center in English Composition 146

I INTRODUCTION

i Preface

According to the original proposal (January, March 1962), the Curriculum Center at Northwestern had the following objectives:

a. to review and make available to the schools the results of research in the teaching of composition;

b. to determine precisely what is now being done--and how and why it is being done--in teaching composition and language;

c. to define the aims of composition, considering such matters as the relation of creative writing to exposition and also the relation of composition to language, psychology, rhetoric, and reading;

d. to develop manageable teaching units in language and writing that can be tested before an ambitious sequential program is finally recommended;

e. to relate composition to the various levels of intellectual endowment and define aims appropriate to each level; and

f. to prepare for widespread use, such materials as course syllabi and review and bibliographies of research.

Anyone familiar with the attitudes of college people in the early sixties will recognize the mood and assumptions behind that statement. And had the circumstances remained constant, the course of the Northwestern Center would have been ordinary enough. But the fact is that the life of the Center included what may turn out to have been a moment of decisive change in the history of the teaching of English in the United States. And what was clear when the proposal for the Center was submitted in 1962 did not long remain so. Moreover, to meet quite local (not to say special) conditions, the contract of the Center was revised in March 1965. The revision did not entail any essential changes in the original objectives, although some deletions were made, and the range of the study was set at grades seven through twelve (rather than fourteen). But at the same time there was also a change in the Directorship and organization of the Center; inevitably this meant some changes in approach.

Everything considered, perhaps the most significant fact to bring out in the Final Report of the Northwestern Curriculum Study Center in English is the story of how events affected the accomplishment of its original objectives. After all, the contact between colleges and schools has not been unruffling to either; and to an extent, the story of the Northwestern Center may provide some evidence--however special--of the play of forces--ideological, political, and personal--which shaped the course of English teaching in this period. Historical narrative, though it does not always deal with quantifiable problems, nevertheless has its basis in empirical data, and observation by responsible men has a validity of its own, though of course not of a statistical sort.

It is to be hoped that this procedure falls within the "cases where, due to the unusual nature of the project, the director may develop his own format [for the Final Report]." (See "Instruction for Preparing Reports . . . ." [Washington: n. d., U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare], p. 3)

ii Background

Obviously the decision to establish Curriculum Study Centers in a number of universities was the outcome of the flurry in American edcation caused, first of all, by the criticisms of figures such as Arthur Bestor and Admiral Rickover and, secondly, by the apparent success of Russia in scientific and engineering education that was signalized by the launching of Sputnik. This context was recognized in the original proposal for the Center (January, March 1962, Section 3, Backgrounds, pp. 2-3). But, curiously, the most significant fact about the reform movement--that it had begun in mathematics, physics, and the foreign languages--was only alluded to, and that in a parenthesis.

Nevertheless it seems clear that the framers of the proposal must have at least felt, if they did not fully recognize, a degree of skepticism about the applicability to the teaching of English of some, at any rate, of the assumptions and values of the reformers. They were perhaps even more skeptical about the effect on the behavior of teachers in the classroom that seemed likely to result from the reform discussion. One paragraph in the proposal (pp. 3-4) expresses this feeling as clearly as it could be at the time, given the writer's comparative lack of direct contact with the schools' response to the pressure of the criticism.

After an allusion to other expressions of uneasiness, the proposal indicates several specific reservations about the nature of the reforms being suggested to the schools.

> In the first place, much of the reform activity does seem to be out of touch with the classroom; or rather, its principles have not yet been brought into touch with the actual classroom situation. Second, the suggested principles [of reform] are abstractions from the subject matter (or sometimes from the social ideals of their proponents) and show no very close connection with the needs and capacities of pupils. Third, the reforms do seem to be addressed to the inadequacies of some sort of fictional or mythical "teacher," perhaps in the small high school, and to define the inadequacies as largely personal (a lack of "education in the subject matter") rather than institutional (the result of the failure of the subject matter specialists to analyze their subject). Fourth, the reforms very often center on improving the preparation of the gifted and the college-bound (the latter apparently defined as those bound for the prestige colleges where a literary culture is, or may be, expected, if not demanded), while the work of the general student is left untouched. Fifth, the reforms seem to center on the content and method of courses and to ignore the practical techniques or the actual operations by which concepts can be actualized for pupils in the classroom. Sixth, the reformers have been concerned with the division of the subject matter (chiefly literature) among the various levels of the school system; they have done little to explore how the subject matter is to be divided for the purpose of teaching and learning. Seventh, it is not always clear that the reformers are willing to recognize (a) what teachers do know about presenting the material that they have been given to present, and (b) what educational research has discovered about the learning process.

It seems clear that the staff of the Northwestern Center did not, even so early as 1962, wholeheartedly accept the notion that their best contribution to "curriculum reform" could be made by a purely intellectualistic analysis of what is currently known as the "discipline of English" or, alternatively, among those close to teacher preparation, the "subject matter area of English." It would be inaccurate to say that there was any recognition of the logical flaws in the English "tripod" of "language, literature, and composition." But at least there was a fairly strong suspicion of teaching techniques and practices derived from logical analysis of such abstractions.

The first action at the Center, then, was the establishment of a "large advisory council" composed of representatives of the co-operating school districts. (See Appendix I, pp. 38 - 42 for the original table of organization of the Center.) Subsequently, in April and May 1962, as the first work of the Center, a series of school "visitations" was made by Dean E. T. McSwain, then Dean of the School of Education, and Professor Jean H. Hagstrum, then Chairman of the English Department, who was acting as the operating head of the Center. For the most part, their conversations were with superintendents, principals, and department chairmen. "The design was to acquaint the English Department Chairman . . . with school problems, and this venture seemed extremely worth while inasmuch as the school people were impressed by the unusual sight of a Professor of English going about with a Dean of Education." (Letter of 8 October 1964, Payson S. Wild, Vice-president and Dean of Faculties, to Ralph C. M. Flynt, Associate Commissioner of Education.)

The results of these exploratory conversations were recorded in twelve "Bulletins" which were distributed among members of the Advisory Council and others. (For the Bulletins, see Appendix II, pp.43-61. Their content is of some historical interest.) A final summary was made for a meeting of the Policy Committee of the Center, 28 May 1962. In it, the "advice" from the schools was divided into five kinds.

> (1) The Center should collect and disseminate _information_. Its shelves should house curricular materials, class outlines, reports of plans underway and of successful research--collected mostly from the participating and neighboring schools but also from other sources. A bulletin should be issued periodically, to keep everyone in this area informed of what is taking place. A person of prestige from the University . . . should make the dissemination of information from participating schools a matter of his special concern. The experimental work now being done in the Chicago school system should be reported to the entire community.
>
> (2) The Curriculum Center should conduct meetings of _discussion_. English chairmen, teachers with special skills, and administrators should be convened periodically to think about the English curriculum.
>
> (3) Several short-term projects of limited aim should be undertaken (a) to inform the community about what is going on and (b) to make recommendations. Such studies as the following have been recommended: spelling, the use of the dictionary, the research paper, models of theme correction, the impromptu theme, detailed descriptions of theme assignments in composition that have been proved successful.

(4) Ultimately the Center should recommend a sequential curriculum in English. The proper place to begin is with composition in the seventh and eighth grades. Several beginnings are now being made locally. Reports of these activities should be digested, interpreted, and refined.

(5) Many schools urge that we consider administrative problems: the size of classes, the recruitment and training of new teachers, the internship, levels of learning before the high school, labor-saving devices, team teaching, lay readers.

So described, the conversations seem to have contained strikingly little on the major concern of the Curriculum Center, an investigation of the teaching of composition, to discover weaknesses and strengths, and to make recommendations looking toward improvement. To have taken literally the implications of the conversations, would have meant the transformation of the Center into an agency of the schools. It would have become a clearing house, a resource center, to tell the world about successful practices already in use in the schools, and to help the schools with such problems of technics and administration as had already been identified by their several layers of management.

Of course the contractual purpose of the Center may have seemed so obvious that the talkers did not consider taking it up. But another possibility is that the conversations were seized upon as a means of expressing both uncertainty about the kind of change needed in the teaching of composition, and indeed some diffidence about recognizing the need of any change at all. In fact, the evidence is that the Center did begin operating in the shadow of uncertainty. A letter from one of the Co-directors (22 March 1962) is indicative:

> I think we must go slow in developing our own ideas concerning curriculum improvement--however attractive and, even, useful those ideas might appear to us. Nor should we "manage" things so that certain emphases we think important evolve from our discussions with the public school people. We discussed a series of lessons on the use of the dictionary; should we go ahead with such lessons even though they do not actually stem from the discussions and declarations of public school personnel?

The reply from his congener is to be noted:

> Your advice about giving the schools more than a fair chance to be heard is certainly sound. We will, of course, know more precisely how to treat the schools once [we]

> have visited them and once our advisory council has met. I agree that we must not manipulate things so that we get what we already have decided on. But how do you distinguish manipulation from proper guidance? From keeping a firm hand on the rudder? It is impossible to discuss these matters abstractly. We must learn empirically how leadership is to be exercised.

A year later, the relationship between the schools and the Center had not yet been resolved. One of the Co-directors still obviously felt that the Center existed as an extension of the schools. In his statement on the Center prepared for the Indiana Conference on English Education (28-30 March 1963) we read, "The cooperating schools in the area [offer] a complex laboratory of students, teachers, and practices; discussion between Center and school personnel [has] helped sharpen the focus of the Center's work." And again,

> Regular dialogue between the Center and school personnel will continue to define manageable, useful projects with which the Center must concern itself. On the Advisory Council of the Center sit representatives of most of the school systems in the area--usually chairmen of either English or language arts departments. Members of the Council have already had an impact upon the work of the Center.

But this "impact"--in the forms of "demands for assist--ance"--seems to have been interpreted quite narrowly, as if to keep the work of the Center wholly within the known practices of the schools. The questions that were asked concerned matters of form and technique, not of content. For example, "Do 7th and 8th grade students need assignments and instruction less rigorous and forbidding than those accompanying formal exposition and more closely related to narration, description, and other forms of creative writing?" In the context of school composition, that question is not, perhaps, without an impact of its own. But still its phrasing preserves the four forms of discourse, which have been a staple of composition teaching in this country since the latter part of the nineteenth century. Similarly, though the Indiana Statement suggests some preference for informal over formal English, it does so in a sentence which preserves the ancient objective of the composition course, that of improving the students' use of English. It is difficult not to conclude that the job of the Center was being defined as that of discovering means, perhaps mechanical, of improving the schools' efficiency in doing what they always had done.

In the spring of 1963, the Staff of the Center began to plan its attack on the problem of teaching composition. (The first projects bruited had been investigations of spelling, vocabulary building, and the use of the dictionary.) The earliest set of directions for this project, as stated in a memorandum between the Co-directors, read as follows:

> You asked me to put in writing what I think we ought to be getting out of [the] Niles [Township] School[s] during the coming spring quarter. I shall attempt to do so.
>
> (1) We want samples of various kinds of writing from grades six through nine. Some will be impromptu writing, others the result of particular assignments. We should not, it seems to me, impose assignments or aims upon high school teachers at this time, but should ask them for samples of what they currently do. They should be asked to describe clearly and fully the kind of assignment made and also provide as many details about the student as possible.
>
> (2) We should like to have outlines of the curricula and as much information as possible on how these outlines are actually put into practice--that is, what is the aim of each assignment? how are themes corrected? are discussion periods used to prepare for written expression? how is the student motivated? We also want information about texts, syllabi, lesson plans, exercises, audio-visual aids, etc.
>
> (3) We want all of the materials outlined under (2) for grammar also; but, more specifically, we should also like a statement of the general purposes governing instruction in grammar.

The job-analysis of this project, reported at the Indiana Conference, is suggestive. There it was said that samples of student writing were to be collected from the approximately forty classes in grades six through ten in the neighboring district. The district schools are highly "tracked": there were low ability, regular, honors, and heterogeneous sections. Children were to write (in something of a test situation) various sorts of papers: impromptu, creative, practical. Some papers were to "get their energy from students' reactions to professional models of both artistic and utililitarian sorts." In addition, it was said, one of the directors and a ninth grade teacher would

> get information about the student writers, too: For example, how capable as writers have these students proved themselves? How capable do they promise to be? What kinds of homes do they come from? What kinds of instruction have they had?

In the end only two of the several kinds of papers were done: one was "descriptive," the other "argumentative." (See Appendix IV, pp. 65 -72 for the directions for the writing samples.) But even so, nearly eight hundred children wrote close to sixteen hundred papers.

In the summer of 1963, some attempt was made to use the papers to establish warrantable generalizations about one aspect of the style of children's writing: "the relationship between competence in the use of detail and quality of description." Correlations between holistic judgments of papers and estimates of "detail-content" would be found, it was hoped.

Several experimental hypotheses were established, and the Center personnel sought to prove or disprove them from the data available in the Niles sample. Each of the hypotheses involved "quantitative" aspects. People engaged in "counting" were continually concerned with problems of significance and definition.

We found it relatively simple to get agreement from "competent judges" concerning the general quality of certain student papers. We also found it relatively simple to quantify certain kinds of discrete information. For example:

> the average number of sentences in certain "excellent" papers is 14.3;
> the average number of sentences in certain "bad" papers is 10.2.

or

> the average number of complex sentences in "excellent: papers is 3.1;
> the average number of complex sentences in "bad" papers is 1.5.

So with number of words, number of details, number of words per sentence, number of words of more than three syllables, etc.

But to test a hypothesis concerning the quality of detail used by writers of "excellent" descriptions, the quantifiers must agree on what a detail is and, further, agree on its quality or effectiveness. Can a detail be defined simply as a noun modified in this way or that? Is a "ripped maroon bolster" a more effective detail than "a torn red pillow"? Judging such detail apart from the purpose of the writer, the intended audience, etc., seems futile. Moreover, attempts to establish *a priori* classifications for details

> ranged from a reworking of Roget's classifications, an adaptation of Bacon's sensibles, and several different rhetorical categorizations to post facto categorizations inferred from papers judged to be "excellent" student writing.

This is an interesting and useful analysis of one of the most pressing perplexities in the evaluation of teaching materials in English. But the problem seems not to have been pursued.

Along with, but apparently independent of, this investigation, there was to be, beginning in June, a workshop on composition assignments. Three school teachers, joined by members of the Center Staff, were to

> have in hand a statement of convictions that have grown out of debate and study at the Center--convictions about such things as the use of student and professional models in getting ready to write, about ways of building sensory experience, about alternate strategies that might accomplish a single writing job, about similarities and differences between speech and writing, and the like.

It was suggested that the work of the summer was to begin in discussion of these "convictions."

Several things are to be said about these passages. In the first place, on the negative side, as it were, the proposed investigation was somewhat lacking in form. As described, it seems to have been based on the kind of assumptions that are often supposed to underlie Baconian induction; that is, since valid conclusions may be drawn by enumerative induction from simple ocular inspection, the beginning of an investigation may be in the random or haphazard accumulation of material. But of course the concepts or preconceptions are always there, however unregarded or disregarded. And so it is proper to point out that in its concentration on the properties of various kinds of papers, the investigation showed a very strong influence from the composition teacher's conventional concern with the written product (rather than the writing process) and also his reliance upon the student's paper not merely as a test of the student's competence (and his own) but also and even as his chief teaching tool.

On the positive side, two points may be noted. The proposal "to get information about the student writers" was worthwhile. Even though the questions that were to guide the work do not now seem very promising, still the interest in trying to analyze the experience of students as writers suggests that there was at least a slight awareness that the received image of composition needed re-examination from some new standpoint. The way teachers were to be involved in the work is also noteworthy. Though it was perhaps not very strongly felt, there does seem to have been some desire to provide conditions that would encourage them to learn how to become innovative as a result of their own work and study. "For a month or more," the Center statement reads, "the three teachers, sometimes working alone, sometimes with their colleagues and with Center personnel, will read, study, think, and then write . . . ."

But here the experience of the Center seems to be very firm evidence of the strength of convention's hold in matters of curriculum development and lesson planning. The sentence just quoted ends in this fashion, ". . . . and then write drafts of sequential composition assignments, each sequence focusing on a given writing job." The passage goes on,

> For illustration, assume that one of the jobs thought to be reasonable and useful for junior high students is a character sketch. A first assignment might involve the careful observation of a classmate, the recording of these observations, and then their ordering into a paragraph. A second character sketch might demand more imagination, something more of the student's personality and perceptions. This more complicated assignment might begin from a series of pictures students are to observe and interpret. Assuming that students know less about anonymous portraits than they do of their classmates, an imaginative response might be encouraged. Later, even at another grade level, students might be asked to create a fictional character based on readings. They might have in front of them sample sketches culled from good junior books, other more complicated sketches revealed expertly in professional writing.

It should go without saying that the activities sketched here are all, in themselves, very good. It seems likely that children who are allowed and encouraged to do a good deal of such observing and notetaking will, at some time or other, become able to deal with writing. There are, however, three very worrying things about the assignments. First is the insistence on tying these activities not merely to papers but in fact to quite artificial sorts of papers. Certainly the "paragraph" is an artificial notion, and it may be that the "character sketch" is too. Involving children of junior high age in problems of form, such as are implied here, is a dubious practice. A second problem is the insistence on organizing the assignments in a "sequence" that is based on abstractly determined characteristics of the exercise. Using the imagination was, apparently, conceived as more difficult than observing, though at a guess the contrary might be supposed to be true. Finally, there is the recurrent use of "job" and "assignment" as means of describing the writing activity of the children.

II PROCEDURE

In the event, however, when, in that summer of 1963, work on new materials actually began, the direction was somewhat different from that suggested in the documents just discussed. The modification resulted from a further analysis of the samples of children's writing that had been accumulated during the spring of 1963. This second time, the papers were read by a high school teacher (subsequently a curriculum director and now a principal) and a member of the Center staff. Undoubtedly the impressions of the readers were controlled by their experience of the "inadequacy" of the writing of high school students and college freshmen. In other words, they were looking at the papers in hand for evidence of what they regarded as weaknesses in the writing of older children. Probably this bias is ill-advised; it cannot be said to be unusual.

At any rate, the result of the readings was stated for the Center (though not by either of the readers) in the following terms:

> Everyone agreed that the writing was flat--that it lacked vividness, descriptive detail, imagery, metaphor. The same paucity of sensuous detail and imagery that impoverishes writing in college was already the most striking deficiency in the writing of the grades. [The present writer would note also the inaccuracy of much of the writing, its lack of contact with the (presumed) feeling-life of children, and its generally abstract and even academic quality.]
>
> To this awareness was added a growing conviction, based on actual experience with junior high school students and on a thorough examination of junior high school curricula, that there was not nearly enough informal writing in the seventh and eighth grades. In some cases long papers or even research papers were assigned. Usually fairly formal exposition has pre-empted the field, and the writing of narration and description was only perfunctory. There seemed too little concern with the personal or informal essaya with the experiences, interests, insights of the students themselves, with autobiographies, anecdotes, personal letters, and biographies.

There is an important fact about these paragraphs. Though they come rather late in the history of the Curriculum Center, and though they express a fairly broad criticism of the composition program in the junior high school, they still preserve the conventional categories of the very system they criticize. Even more interesting is the fact which emerged from the conversations and comments of the teachers who were working at the Center. Apparently the "weaknesses" in student writing alluded to in the first paragraph were, it turned out, precisely those that the teachers professed to be working to correct. By this time (that is, the summer of 1963) the accumulated evidence seemed to suggest that little profit was to be expected from adjustments in the present system, and indeed that neither "sophisticated use of audio-visual aids" nor "introduction of those principles from the rhetorical tradition that are adaptable to early adolesc[ence]" was likely to help. (The quotations are from the report to the Indiana Conference on English Education, cited above, p. 6.) It was being borne in upon the Staff of the Center that what was called for was a radical review not only of the techniques and methods associated with the teaching of composition in the schools, but also of the very values and objectives that support and justify its place in the curriculum.

The notion that was emerging at this time--call it hypothesis--was that the writing of children at the seventh and eighth grade level--and also, perhaps, their general conceptual foundation for further education--would be strengthened or supported by more or less systematic practice in observation and analysis of rather simple objects and actions. Put another way, it was supposed that children need, as a basis for writing, some practice in thinking concretely and specifically. (The idea is hardly a new one; see below, pp. 17 ff.)

Probably the basis of all writing, imaginative as well as practical, is accurate, detailed, specific, and full observation of the world. As Erich Fromm says, "The art of seeing is about the most important act one can perform in one's life." A man who has learned to see a fish (cf. Shaler's account of his first days as a student with Agassiz) has at least the potentiality of seeing the parts and details of the great abstract questions of ethics and politics, to say nothing of the problems of business and industry. It seems to be the case, however, that human beings do not naturally see in detail but rather in broad outline. You can know that a thing is a locomotive without seeing that its wheels are arranged in 2-6-6-2 order, or knowing that that formula signifies a locomotive with a leading axle, six pairs of driving wheels, and a trailing axle supporting the firebox, or indeed that such a locomotive would have two coupled, articulated parts and would be an example of a second stage, developed in this country, of the Mallet locomotive, which was originally of French design. You can know that a thing is a picture without seeing whether the lines have been produced from wood or linoleum blocks, whether they have been drawn on metal or left there by the action of an acid.

The ability to make such detailed perceptions must be learned. Indeed, so must the need for them. For when an object of discussion is visible or familiar to all parties in a discussion, it is, of course, not necessary to describe it in detail; a general term will do. On the other hand, it is not hard to imagine the many times when specific descriptions are necessary, if communication is to be complete. One of the reasons for the characterless and impersonal writing that children turn out is probably their inability to see, in all the complex meanings of the word. It is true, of course, that their teachers do not often ask them to look at anything, let alone see it. Bemused by the bits and pieces from the rhetorical tradition out of which their textbooks are made, the teachers deliberately--and from the best of intentions--train children to be abstract by insisting that they learn how to form topic sentences for paragraphs and thesis sentences for outlines, as if they were going to spend their lives arguing in courts and legislative chambers. Why, then, should children not have some practice in looking and reporting, in dealing with things before they deal with words, especially words on paper? As Cato said a long time ago, rem tene, verba sequentur.

The lessons which were developed as a result of this hypothesis were designed to take children through the actions involved in discovering the material for rather simple personal reports. It was supposed that the cause of improvement in their writing (if any) would be in the pressure to be accurate and specific, which would require the discovery of words and constructions to classify and particularize their general observations.

In designing these lessons the Center Staff had in mind the fact that one of the announced purposes of Project English was curriculum development and the promotion of change in the schools. As indicated above, the Staff felt that the improvement of teaching depends, to a very great extent, on improvement in the attitude teachers take toward their responsiblities as curriculum planners. It seemed to the Staff at the time (and still does) that the essential condition for improvement is that teachers become accustomed to making choices among their materials on grounds derived from or appropriate to the particular needs of their various students.

Accordingly the lessons were over-developed, as it might be said. That is, in each lesson there were more exercises and activities than, it was supposed, any teacher would find time to do. In addition, though the lessons were arranged in what seemed to the Staff a rough order of difficulty, it was emphasized in various ways that the order was not fixed, and indeed that the total collection of lessons was not regarded as exhaustive and complete. Teachers could make shifts, and omissions too, without necessarily weakening the effect of the materials. Finally, paper assignments were omitted. As a matter of fact, is was hoped that teachers might therefore de-emphasize the paper as a part of the composition class. If they persisted in resting their teaching on papers, which seemed likely, at least they would be free to develop their own assignments, in terms of their own and their students needs and interests.

Beginning in the Fall of 1964, the lessons were informally tested in a number of schools of different sorts. (For a list of the co-operating schools, see Appendix III, p.62.) Perhaps the one clear finding that emerged from this experience was the very great difficulty of bringing about change in the attitudes of teachers. All the teachers expressed strong desires to try something "new." But the "new" that they wanted was to be in technique--the manner or means of classroom presentation of their material. Innovation in content and method they found difficult to accept or understand. Curiously, they would report that children seemed to enjoy the lessons, but they would then add that neither they nor the children saw what the lessons had to do with writing. What was missing, it transpired, was (1) papers, (2) proofreading by teachers to catch various kinds of errors, and hence (3) "functional" study of grammar.

In fairness to the teachers, it must be admitted that they were probably insufficiently prepared for the task of using the lessons. A lengthy Introduction laid out the rationale for the lessons (see above, pp. 12-14 for a summary version), and it was thought that would be guide enough. It wasn't. Moreover very few of the teachers using the lessons had had any connection with their creation. Commitment was minimal. In general, the teachers seem to have felt themselves involved in nothing more than an impersonal extension of courtesy to a university "team" of researchers or experimenters. The children, however, were often reported to be excited by being parts of an experiment; apparently the teachers thought this fact would be heard with pleasure. Needless to say, it was the cause rather of disturbance and dismay; and that not because of any concern for the Hawthorne effect.

Finally it seems now that it must have been a major error to make contact with the teachers chiefly through usual channels. Probably such an approach must lessen the amount of value teachers will invest in a project. Of course counter measures can be taken; in-service briefing, supporting visits are obvious possibilities. But these are still quite institutional, quite within the known procedures of educational management. And it does not seem that innovations achieved through conventional channels can have a strong life, or a long one. Besides, in the circumstances of school life and organization, in-service contacts must almost necessarily be limited and hasty, with all the disadvantages of the episodic. At any rate, in the course of the year, the members of the Center Staff came to realize that they needed to know a good deal more than they did about the motives for teacher behavior and the dynamics of the school organization, if the lessons were to be given a fair chance in adequate use.

To a great extent, the teachers who developed, wrote, and revised the lessons at the Center, in the summers of 1963, 1964, and 1965 did learn to tolerate and indeed to enjoy the responsibility that accompanies the opportunity for choosing among teaching materials. In their long summer hours of work, they learned to develop and follow a design in their own fashions. In a way they must have had a sort of Bruneresque experience of learning the form and implications of a general idea, which they could use as a basis for making decisions about their own practical actions. Having the general framework and knowing the relationship between the theory and the actions, they were able to make rational choices comfortably.

Perhaps the general atmosphere of the Curriculum Center was the cause of their development. Every effort was made to encourage the growth of their self-trust. After all, being in a way _in statu pupillari_, they had to be allowed at least the freedoms that were being urged upon them as among the rights of children. The essential requirement seemed to be that they come to have the writer's desire to revise and improve. Hence they had to really believe that they controlled the lessons they were producing. They had to believe that, having tried the lessons in their classrooms (with variations, additions, or deletions, as they might desire), they could, of their own wish, incorporate in the lessons whatever changes seemed valuable or necessary. The lessons were not fixed, and especially they were not fixed by the notions of the Director. If the result was loose ends, false starts, thin developments, then so it was. Inadequacy in the lessons would have to be tolerated, for the end was not a perfect lesson, but only a better and more confident teacher.

In Fall, 1964, the Center Staff began to discuss the kind of work that could be expected from, the kind of lessons that could be directed toward, students in the ninth and tenth grades. The responsibility of the Center was to study the curriculum in composition in the schools and to propose revisions, where the necessity appeared. Abstractly, such a charge could, and by many would, be interpreted as demanding the creation of either a new or at least a fuller curriculum in composition, which would have at least a chronological sequence through all the years of schooling from seventh grade to twelfth, and which--ideally at least--would also be developmental and incremental.

But planning involves children and time, as well as the subject or the discipline. And it seemed to the Staff of the Center that the amount of repetition in present curricula is by no means an accident of bad planning; rather it is a necessary consequence of the principles that now control curriculum planning in composition. So far as can be seen, difficulty alone has been the one sure principle of differentiation on which sequence has been based; and in all too many cases it is not an exaggeration to say that the sign of difficulty has been quantitative only.

Discussion of these conditions led to the conclusion that the materials at the Center might be ordered acoording to principles derived from analysis of the process of writing as it may be related to accepted knowledge or reasonably informed guesses about the growth of children. (That is, on such more or less empirical facts rather than on the arbitrary consequences of the present grade organization of the American public school.) It was decided that the seventh and eighth grade lessons should be regarded as giving practice in the basic processes of composition: observation, analysis, accumulation of material, and expansion of the word-stock. Hence the title Some Lessons in the Basic Processes of Composition. The "Some," incidentally, was used to emphasize the notion that is discussed above, p. 14, that the lessons include the possibility of choice. The Basic Lessons were seen as exercises, having the purpose of exploring the resources of words and sentences; the problems of form in conventional writing units were, on the whole, to be left untouched, on the grounds that material is more important than form anyway, and that children of thirteen or fourteen may not be able (or willing?) to deal with formal abstractions.

In the second division of the Northwestern Lessons, it was thought, children might be introduced to some of the simpler journalistic forms: factual reports (news-stories), short editorials, opinion columns, reviews. Journalistic forms were thought appropriate to this purpose for two very ordinary reasons. First, only in newspapers and in the commentary sections of some magazines is it possible to find real (that is, published) pieces of writing that correspond to the word limitations of most assignments in composition classes. Second, the journalistic style (informal but hardly uncalculated) seemed closer to the needs of the audience that was being addressed: various kinds of students, many, if not most, of whom might be expected to have somewhat less than a considerable interest in, say, the style found in most pieces of formal argument and exposition.

As it turned out, the lessons came to emphasize the relationships a writer may take to his material, to his central idea, his audience. These relationships were analyzed under the rubrics of report, analysis, and evaluation. The categories suggest the old four forms of discourse in all their abstractness; so it is important to note that the lessons are planned to demonstrate the activities of the writer in the gathering of material for the production of various kinds of writing. In general the lessons do not consider the abstract qualities of style, on which the four forms are based.

In many respects the high school lessons follow directly from the emphasis on observation and description as the basic processes of composition in the junior high school lessons. The "basic processes" of observing and describing are those of the reporter, who presents his material objectively to the reader. He surveys material, selects salient features, and re-creates a picture of the data for his audience. In the analysis another step is added to the process; the writer collects his material then interprets its significance. He thus adds a personal element, his own opinion, before and during writing. Finally, in the evaluation, another step, criticism, is added. But all of these processes are cumulative; a writer always starts with a basic set of observations, with material, and afterwards arrives at interpretation or criticism. In both the junior high school and senior high school lessons, attention is focused on the information contained in a piece and what the author does with it in transforming it into an essay.

It is interesting to note that this same approach to writing assignments appeared briefly in the mid-nineteenth century as part of the Pestalozzian object lesson. In the lower grades, object-teaching theory called for the teacher to bring common objects, perhaps an apple or baseball or picture, into the class for the children to discuss. In their conversations, and in the writing which frequently followed, the children then reported on their observations. In the upper years of the elementary school the writing became more complex; the students might write abstract descriptions (we would call this analysis) for example describing the presumed character traits of a figure in a picture, or they might begin writing comparisons of two or more objects. The final stage in this sequence (a stage which was discussed in the periodical literature but never seems to have gotten into the texts) was for the students to move into criticism of events, situations, or books. The key point in object-teaching and in our materials was the attention paid to the material-gathering stage; while most nineteenth century rhetoricians were focusing on style and the abstract forms of discourse, the object-lessons constantly focused on the gathering of materials, and regarded good writing as the more or less natural by-product of careful collection and examination of material.

As work and discussion on the ninth and tenth grade lessons proceeded, it became clear that what was being produced, including the lessons for seventh and eighth grades, was a core curriculum in composition. The lessons were seen as embodying the teachable principles and practices of "writing." It should be noted that this "core curriculum" is assumed to take up the problems of a child who is being asked (for the first time, it is to be hoped) to consider the problems of writing as such. The audience is not precisely seventh-graders or twelfth-graders, not twelve-year-olds nor seventeen-year-olds, not disadvantaged children, not the college bound; neither those in the first track nor those in the last. The audience for these lessons may better be taken as "children who are becoming able to learn about writing"; that is, "who are becoming able to comprehend and use whatever few concepts we have developed to talk about writing." It has seemed likely to the Center Staff that most children will reach this stage of development around thirteen or fourteen, in grades seven or eight, and that most of the necessary teaching (not learning) about writing can and should be got through between then and grades nine and ten. It is, of course, obvious that what is or may be generally appropriate for most students in grade seven, for example, may in certain situations be specifically useful for, say, verbally skillful and socially advanced children in fifth grade, or, alternatively, for more or less disadvantaged children in ninth or tenth grades. It may even be feasible to use a selection of the lessons as a basis for remedial work in the upper high school years or college.

This model for composition assumes that in the upper years of high school most students will be learning how to handle various kinds of class papers, including, of course, those associated with English classes. Specific instructions for such kinds of papers had better be left to individual instructors. But there are also some general topics in writing which English teachers can usefully take up. Accordingly the Center prepared lessons on the author's persona, so-called, on practical logic in argumentative prose, and on the analysis of prose style. The persona lessons were designed as two units, for grades eleven and twelve. The first unit was to treat the author's voice, the image of the writer that is created for an audience. The second unit considered the various techniques used by authors to adjust their writings to their audiences. The lessons in style include work on the functions of diction and syntax, standard arrangements, and sentence rhythm.

The Center has also issued the following general papers on the teaching of composition: Composition in Seventh and Eighth Grades, On Teaching Composition, On the Concept of Persona, On Types of Prose: An Introduction to the Northwestern Curriculum, On the Use of Models in Teaching Composition, On Usage and the Teaching of Composition, A Guide to the Evaluation of Descriptive Essays, and Questions in Aid of a Modern System of Invention. The last is by Professor Wilbur Gilman of the Speech Department, Queens College, City University of New York.

The minutes of two meetings of the English Department at Evanston Township High School are reprinted for the record. (See Appendix VIII, p. 136.) The meetings (16, 17 February 1966) discussed the progress of the new grammar program in the High School. Since the Center co-operated in the development of the program, it seems proper to report its existence.

One point remains. It has been indicated already; but for the ultimate purposes of this report, it may well be repeated. In the final years of the Northwestern Curriculum Center, there was developed a genuine and fruitful co-operative relationship between University and schools, between school teachers and university teachers. Materials produced in the Center, chiefly by experienced school teachers were used in carefully selected schools; some of the schools might indeed be called self-selected. By that is meant only that someone in the school--teacher or administrator--having studied the Northwestern materials, was persuaded that they were worth using.

In this period the participating teachers came to feel that they themselves had an active role in the lesson-making process. They were not merely passive testers of the lessons, whose responses and suggestions might be listened to but not necessarily followed. Rather they were being asked to use the lessons precisely because their expert practical knowledge would undoubtedly suggest important revisions. In most cases, they had rather direct access to the Center through a teacher who was working or had worked there. Needless to say, much of the success of the Center's efforts has depended on the ability of these latter teachers to carry into their schools the interest in experiment, the interest in trying things out that is the heart of the matter.

Those wise in the ways of research may note at once that this process of interchange implies a rather deliberate building in of the Hawthorne effect, so called. Why this effect should be thought objectionable is never very clearly stated. Indeed, if present discussions of material versus moral incentives--in, for example, Russia and China--are indicative, it must be supposed that assuring a sort of continuing Hawthorne effect is one of the central problems of advanced societies. At any rate, whatever the condition of the research design as a result of the kind of co-operation that has lately existed between Center and schools, it is certain that the information gained from the experience of teachers has had considerable influence on the form of the Northwestern lessons.

It is a pleasure to report the names of those who have helped.

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Curriculum Development and Teaching

Dr. Ellen L. Brachtl, District Superintendent,
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Dr. Shirley E. Stack, District Superintendent
District 1

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- Mrs. Daniels
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NORWOOD BRANCH, TAFT HIGH SCHOOL

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Mrs. Webb, Lincoln School
Miss Wegersen, Beye School
Mrs. Whiston, Longfellow School
Miss Warden, Mann School
Miss Driggs, Hawthorne School
Miss MacKinnon, Beye School

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Ronald Glovetski, Principal

Miss Edgerton
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NICHOLS JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
Evanston, Illinois

Mrs. Morton
Mrs. Roane
Mr. Pace
Mr. Bilsky

III TESTING PROGRAMS AND RESULTS

The Center has conducted four research projects on the teaching of composition in general and on the effectiveness of Center materials. The first of these was exploratory, an attempt to quantify growth patterns in student writing as a possible route to an objective evaluation instrument. We obtained a random sample of student writing on two topics, one descriptive, one argumentative, from schools in Niles Township, Illinois. After discarding papers from heterogeneous classes, we had 561 students, grades seven through ten, from three ability groups. Frequency counts were made on each paper in eleven categories of mechanical and structural characteristics. Growth patterns were determined by analysis of variance, regression analysis, and calculation of correlation coefficients. No truly stable patterns emerged; student writing simply did not appear to be quantifiable within the grouping system that was used. The chief conclusion was that grouping student writers by grade level and ability groups, particularly when those groups are consecutive, is spurious for research purposes. Within-group differences and individual performance differences are so great that between-group differences are obscured. The complete report, "An Investigation of the Grammatical and Structural Characteristics of Student Writing," is included in Appendix IV, pp. 73 - 108.

In the second project we turned to the lessons "A Teacher's Experience with Composition," designed for use with disadvantaged fourth, fifth, and sixth graders. Six classes, three experimental and three control, in Chicago inner-city schools participated in the experiment. A standardized pre-test and post-test were administered in October and June, and experimental classes studied the first unit of "A Teacher's Experience" during the period. We made no attempt to create an evaluation instrument for this project; the writing of these children was simply not developed to the point where a single, consistent set of criteria could be applied to it. Instead, we collected a random sample of papers from both groups and evaluated changes subjectively. Our chief discovery in this study turned out to be distinctly non-quantifiable; it concerned what might be labelled a "truth factor." Pre-test essays from both groups and post-test essays from the control groups did not seem to be accurate reflections of the children's own beliefs and attitudes; when asked to respond to a story describing a boy's first day at school, the children described a fairly peaceful world in which they liked their teachers, friends, and school in general. In many of the experimental post-test essays, however, a different world appeared, one which seemed to reflect more accurately the difficulties of the inner-city child; students described quarrels and fistfights, personal accomplishments and failures; they seemed to lose their fear of expressing themselves openly. This is hardly composition growth in any traditional sense, but it does seem to us to be highly significant. (See Appendix V, p. 109.)

Two formal research projects were conducted to evaluate Center materials at higher grade levels. Six junior high schools in Oak Park, Illinois provided experimental and control classes for testing the seventh grade units, Some Lessons in the Basic Processes of Composition. Pre- and post-test descriptive essays were graded on an evaluation instrument that was based, we felt, on a reasonable compromise between subjective and objective criteria. A panel of judges pre-read many of the essays and listed observable factors which contributed to success. Two theme evaluators then graded the essays on the basis of whether or not the "success" features appeared. The five criteria finally selected included such matters as organization, the use of various kinds of detail, and depth of sentence structure. In this project, analysis of covariance demonstrated that on two criteria, the use of classifying and individualizing details, there was a significant experimental treatment effect. No effect was registered on the other three variables. (See Appendix VI, p. 121.)

The same evaluation instrument was used on pre-test and post-test essays collected at Taft High School, Chicago, Illinois, as a test of two ninth grade units, "An Introduction to the Writing Process," and "The Journalistic Report." In "honors" classes the same two criteria, the use of classifying and individualizing details, registered significant gains in experimental classes. The remaining criteria and all criteria in "regular" classes, showed no significant between-group differences. (See Appendix VII, p. 128.)

The experiments yielded some positive effects, but these were not recorded across-the-board in all projects, so that one would not want to label the materials as "successful" on a statistical basis alone.

It is by now a truth universally acknowledged even among humanists (or at least among humanists who have had to consider the matter) that evaluation of teaching materials is to be accomplished by testing the "ability" of groups of students to do several operations into which any general objective or objectivwsl it is thought, may be analyzed. There is little reason to question such a formulation, and perhaps not much chance. But perhaps its implications may be examined, even now.

Evidently the very first requirement is that the aims be worthwhile. It is a poor word, no doubt--"worthwhile." But since the subject of the discussion is the growth of children and--secondarily--their schooling, a better one does not come easily to mind. So "worthwhile" must do; and perhaps what it may mean can be got at by stating or describing the objective to which the Staff at the Northwestern Center have tried to hold.

At their best--though that may be seldom enough--composition teachers do set themselves a worthwhile objective. One of its phrasings was Porter Perrin's in his Address as President of the National Council of Teachers of English in 1946: "No matter in what dialect it is stated or under how many subheads it is divided, the basic aim of work in composition is simple: to help young people communicate their information and ideas, their imagined conceptions, and their desires and feelings appropriately in situations they meet or may meet--to speak and write to people."

Every word of the quotation is worth consideration; they all seem to have been chosen with extreme care. It is important, however, to make known, as precisely as possible, the inferences that were drawn from them by members of the Center Staff. First, there is no essential opposition between the needs of a child and the objectives of "composition," none between child and teacher. Second, words are expressions of experiences; value and worth must be sought first in the experience, secondarily in the writing of or about the experience, and only in a rather remote third place, in the properties of the written piece, such as correctness, coherence, elegance, refinement, or any of the other abstractions which we are accustomed to say we want children to achieve. Third, it is, therefore, the role of the composition teacher to stand in the place of an editor. He is not to be a tester, or a deviser of exercises either. Though he may have to be an evaluator, he should be so only in some very tenuous and hesitant relationship to his teaching, and certainly not at all as a preliminary to ranking the children in front of him. Rather than any of these, the composition teacher is a person who is helping young people express, in words and constructions that are appropriate to themselves, whatever, from time to time, they may want or need to express.

But what of the child, it will be asked. What ought he to be aimed at? The question is wrong, of course; and its wrongness explains why discussion of objectives in composition must begin with the teacher's. It is not logic that makes this demand, merely the practical exigencies of the current situation. We are all so committed to teaching that we inevitably think of the child as an object. Perhaps this is necessary. At any rate it is current. And the only way to get a proper relationship going, it sometimes seems, is to begin with the attitudes and values of teachers. If those are changed, then perhaps the question can be more properly phrased: What ought the child to be experiencing in "composition"? It has seemed to those working at the Northwestern Center that his essential experience should be to find value in the act of writing and, to the extent possible, of composing too. The addition of "composing" means that it seems reasonable to want the child to have the experience of composing (in writing or speech) a certain number of formal constructions ("papers"? "compositions"?). But probably not every child can be expected to have the pleasure in verbal forms that is implied here. Nevertheless, since the sense of form is a sensuous value of very great moral and psychological importance, it does not seem that it can be entirely overlooked. Given the phrase in the quotation from Perrin about "to speak and write to people," it may be possible to add that children may expect to have their works evaluated by standards that are public and conventional and yet, at the same time, appropriate to themselves; which is no doubt also an experience.

To return now to the "paradigm" of research in composition. If the objectives should be worthwhile, so also should the operations derived from them which are treated (if only, ex hypothesi) as means of realizing, actualizing, or accomplishing the objectives. And the operations should also be relevant, truly derived from the objectives.

In considering this axiom, let it be noted first of all exactly what is innovative about the approach to composition that has been taken at the Northwestern Center. Characteristically, in methods books, curriculum guides, standardized tests, research projects, and most articles in the pedagogical journals, work in composition is treated as a means of improving the child's language or use of language. In most cases, the improvement that is looked toward is an abstraction derived from the properties and qualities of examples of adult writing of various sorts, all of them highly edited for purposes of publication. Necessarily, then, any writing the child does must be treated as either a test or a practice exercise.

The system has the fault of conditioning the child to suppose that his writing is inherently inadequate, and that excellence in the writing class (not in writing, which is seldom involved) consists in imitating the examples of adult writing that his various teachers happen to be familiar with or to regard as good. Needless to say, the child's conditioning hardly leads him to a conscious awareness of the principle he is following. Hence any successes he has will likely be accidental and not repeatable.

Thus the system deprives the child of what would ordinarily be supposed to the chief value (indeed perhaps almost the sufficient condition) of a creative activity--the self-satisfaction arising from a consciousness of successful performance. Grades may provide a satisfaction ("reinforcement") of a kind; but it is an ulterior one. And besides even a good grade carries within itself the seeds of threat and punishment. Teachers, of course, like to talk about satisfactions to come (in work, if not in school), when the ability to use language ("communicate" is the word most often used) will produce a raise or a better job. But all experience argues against a child (even a middle class child) being capable of feeling in the present the value of a satisfaction to come in the future, as the result of the performance of an unknown and probably quite unimaginable act.

In addition, of course, the system has the further fault of treating the child's words in isolation, as examples of grammatical or stylistic inadequacies or infelicities. On the one hand, his words are viewed as isolable from the experience that has caused them and which they are intended to embody. On the other hand, the child himself is viewed as isolable from not only that experience but also from the very experience of using words in the process of composing and making contact with others.

At Northwestern, however, as should be clear from the discussion of objectives, it has been the view rather than the center of "composition" is the student engaged in the act of composing pieces of writing or speaking that somehow may be regarded as wholes. The teaching materials developed at Northwestern are based on three operational assumptions.

1. Writing is a process, and lessons designed to "teach" writing must be developed from what is known or discoverable about that process.

2. Beginning writers need much experience in all the activities that go into the production of written pieces; the preparation of papers is only one of these activities.

3. Style and such matters depend on the ability to see and gather material.

The Northwestern Lessons are conceived to be lessons in the art of writing. "Art" is used here in the practical, not the honorific, sense. The intention is to emphasize the fact that writing is a process. "Now all Art," Aristotle says, "has to do with production, and contrivance, and seeing how any of those things may be produced which may either be or not be, and the origination of which rests with the maker and not with the thing made." But even without Aristotle, common sense would tell us that "writing" refers in the first place to an activity and only secondarily to a congeries of qualities that can be found, or at least looked for, in pieces of writing. It should not be forgotten that terms such as "invention," "disposition," and "word-choice" were originally applied to parts of the process of constructing speeches; only later was their significance transferred to the abstract qualities of the products of that process.

But all processes do have products. And though composition teachers ought to concentrate on the child's growth in his using of language or as he uses language in the process of composing, still no doubt the success or failure of the teaching can only be judged by inference from inspection of the written products which it develops. What, then, might be the properties of finished pieces that would be legitimate signs by which to evaluate teaching materials (and teaching strategies generated by them) that have been constructed on such assumptions as these? Or to put it more actively, what ought a student be able to do, who has had a successful (from his own as well as the teacher's point of view) experience in "composition"?

Such a student will know how to put into his papers an appropriate number of details. He will know how to see details and how to embody them in words that are at least accurate and authentic, and that may be also vivid and forceful. He will be in control of his writing, so that his words will reflect himself. He will know how to move from concrete to general; but at the same time he will keep himself firmly grounded in the specific and concrete. He will be able to give some indications of a sense of form or at least of planned sequence. His writing will convey a sense that it is connected with, grounded in his feelings; that it is somehow relevant to his life in general. Above all there should be evidence that the writing has been done freely, with pleasure and satisfaction.

It does not seem likely that the discrete items in a standardized test will really discover relevant measures of these "behaviors" in children. And perhaps even evaluation of whole papers by sophisticated readers will not quite work, if it is carried on within a framework of norms and averages. Holistic objectives are perhaps not improper; there is at least a long tradition in modern philosophy--from Coleridge (Kant?) to William James and Whitehead--that emphasizes the organic and the ideographic. And perhaps then holistic evaluation, if the term is acceptable, may at least be contemplated. The laws of probability may take care of the problem that Heisenberg gave us; will they also the problems that children force upon us when we try to evaluate their writings?

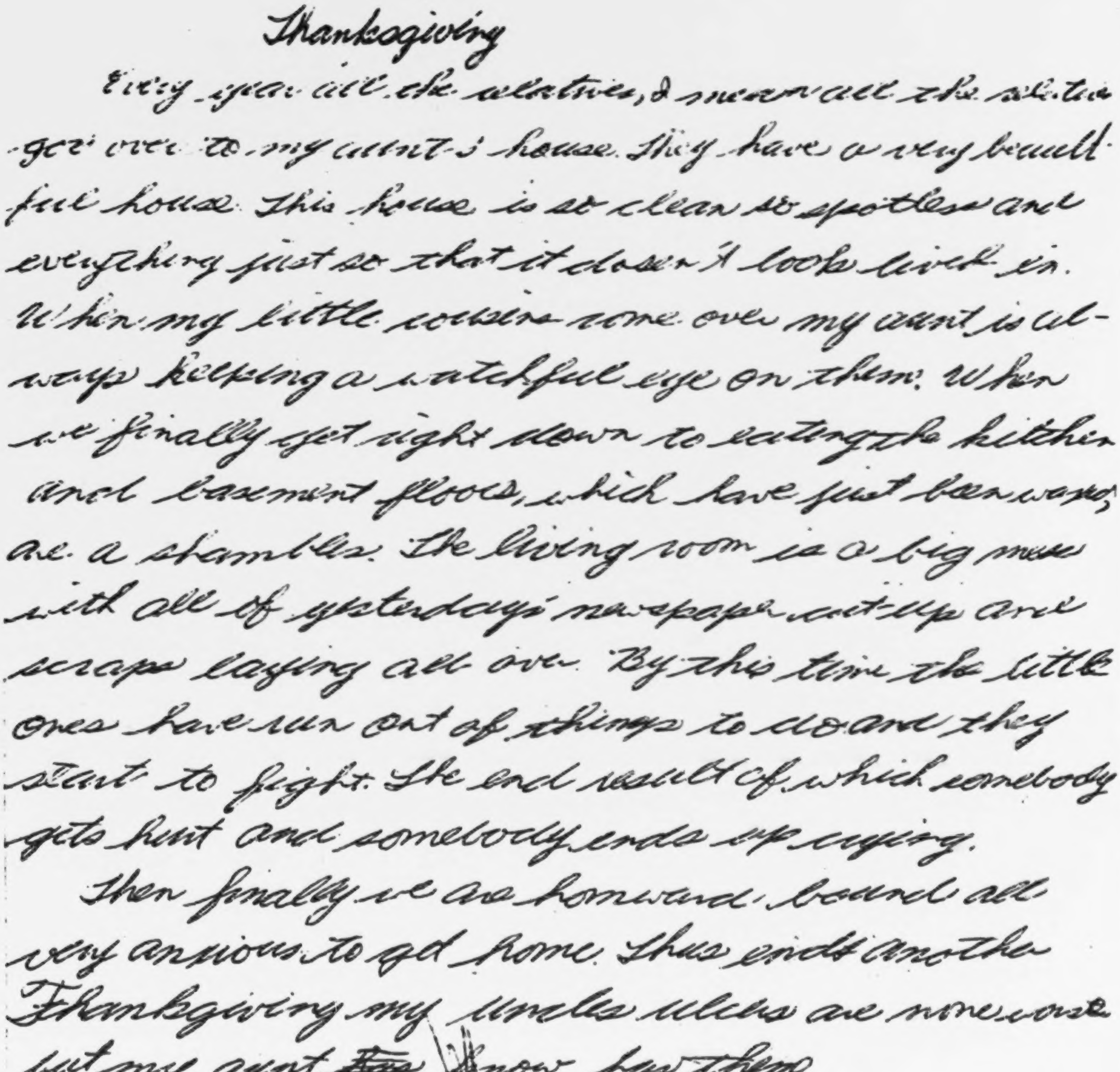
The difficulties of sampling and measuring in order to evaluate children's writing abilities (which is a different problem from that of assessing the writings of children) have been well documented. It is to be hoped that the line taken in this report and in the work of the Northwestern Center is not merely an evasion of the problem. It does seem, though, that evaluating children's writing is very difficulty indeed, *when it is done to determine whether there is a cause in teaching materials or techniques for an observed property of the writing*. It is like trying to catch butterflies with a tennis racket. The only way children and their writing can be made to hold still is to knock the wings off.

Writing will always be an individual pursuit. When mass-measures are applied to it, the focus on the individual is lost. In essence what is then being insisted is that all children should grow in the same direction at the same rate. Variations become distractions. And further, in applying a standardized testing instrument, it is almost inevitable that content--the fundamental element in communication--be lost track of, especially if it is supposed, as it must be, that content is somehow dependent on form. Of course it is possible to talk about general terms like "originality," and perhaps rarity of response may be used as a measure of originality; it is also possible to talk about organization and audience response. But such terms mean little outside an individual paper. What does it mean to say that one group of students is "more original" or "better organized" than another? Very little, it seems, since these terms can be meaningful only as they are specifically understood in the particularities of individual papers, as seen in relation to their writers. By comparing or seeking to compare the common characteristics of five thousand butterflies, we lose the ability to talk about that Spice-Bush Swallowtail on that branch of the forsythia bush that Grandpa planted. And that is an ability too precious to be given up.

An account of an assignment done at Taft High School, in Chicago, may offer some experiential or testimonial evidence for the argument that is being advanced. The writers were a class of low-average, under-achieving seniors, many of whom had rather suddenly decided to treat college as a possibility. Hence they may have had an inner originating motivation to support the effect of the Northwestern materials. In the first part of the fall semester they had been taken through a selection of the *Basic Lessons* (for seventh and eighth grades) that had been made by one of the high school teachers to take care of just such cases as theirs. By the time of this assignment, they had done Lessons I and II in the Reporting Unit of the ninth grade lessons, and for about two weeks had been discussing style, especially prose rhythms. First they had collected ad headlines for analysis; then they had compared the rhythm in essays by E. B. White and Rachel Carson. Then they were asked to look for pieces in newspaper magazine sections that would provide examples of rather relaxed, conversational rhythms.

One boy brought in a short column on past Thanksgivings. The boy led the class in discussion of the relation between the rhythm and the tone and meaning of the essay. It is interesting to note that he singled out for emphasis two paragraphs that were packed with relatively specific details about the food on the table. Afterwards, one of the girls suggested writing on changes in their own views of Thanksgiving. The response was enthusiastic. The students began at once to discuss possible material and approaches. It is probably significant that their class suggestions were rather more impersonal than the papers that were finally turned in.

On the following pages five of the resulting papers are reproduced. They are arranged in an order from the least capable to the most capable child; the range is from approximately 90 IQ to 130 IQ. The first paper is by the boy who brought in the column that started the whole exercise.

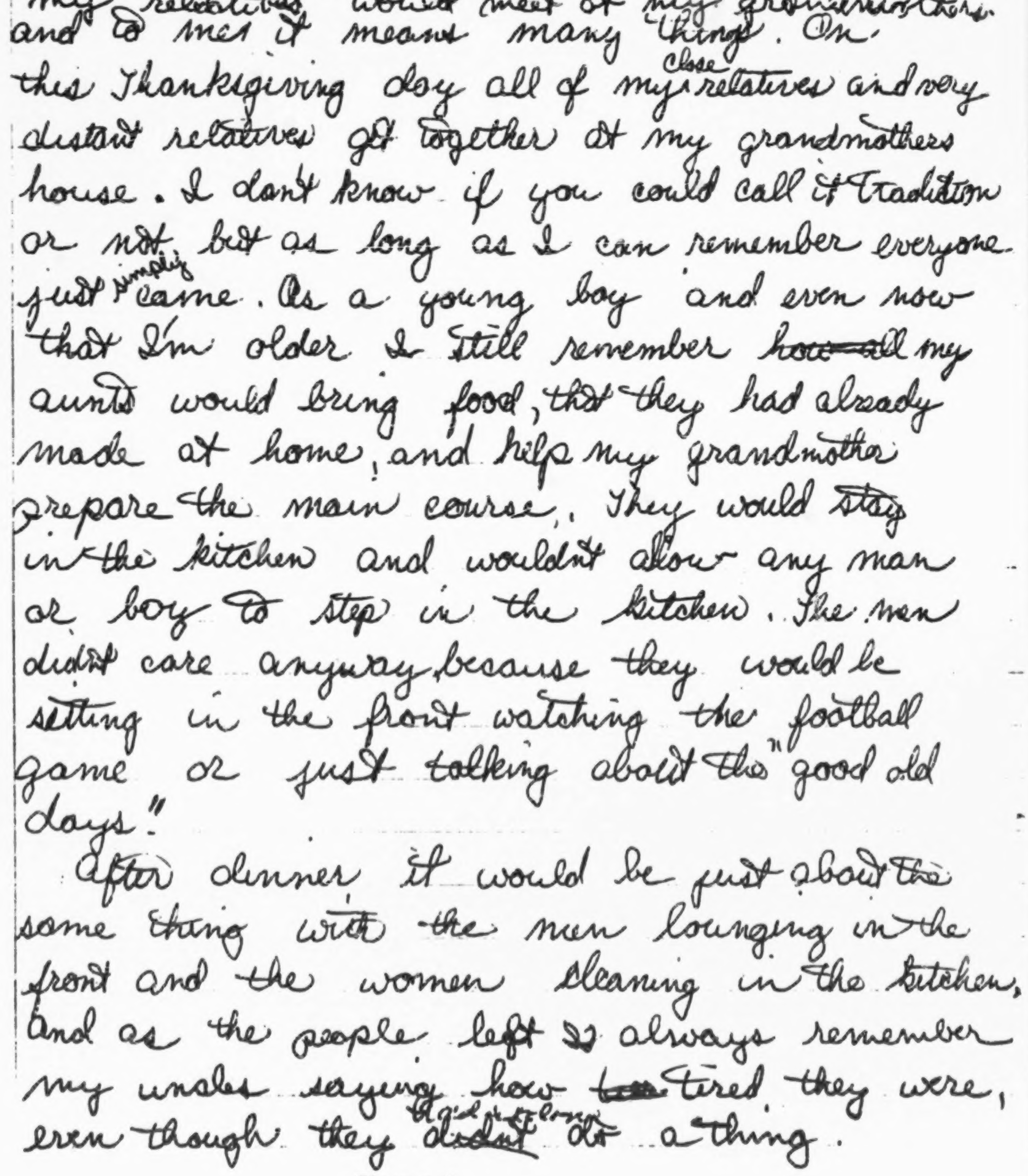


Thanksgiving

Every year all the relatives, I mean all the relatives get over to my aunt's house. They have a very beautiful house. This house is so clean so spotless and everything just so that it doesn't look lived in. When my little cousins come over my aunt is always keeping a watchful eye on them. When we finally get right down to eating the kitchen and basement floors, which have just been waxed, are a shambles. The living room is a big mess with all of yesterdays newspaper cut up and scraps laying all over. By this time the little ones have run out of things to do and they start to fight. The end result of which somebody gets hurt and somebody ends up crying.

Then finally we are homeward bound all very anxious to get home. Thus ends another Thanksgiving my uncles wives are none worse but my aunt ~~has~~ now has them.

Figure 1

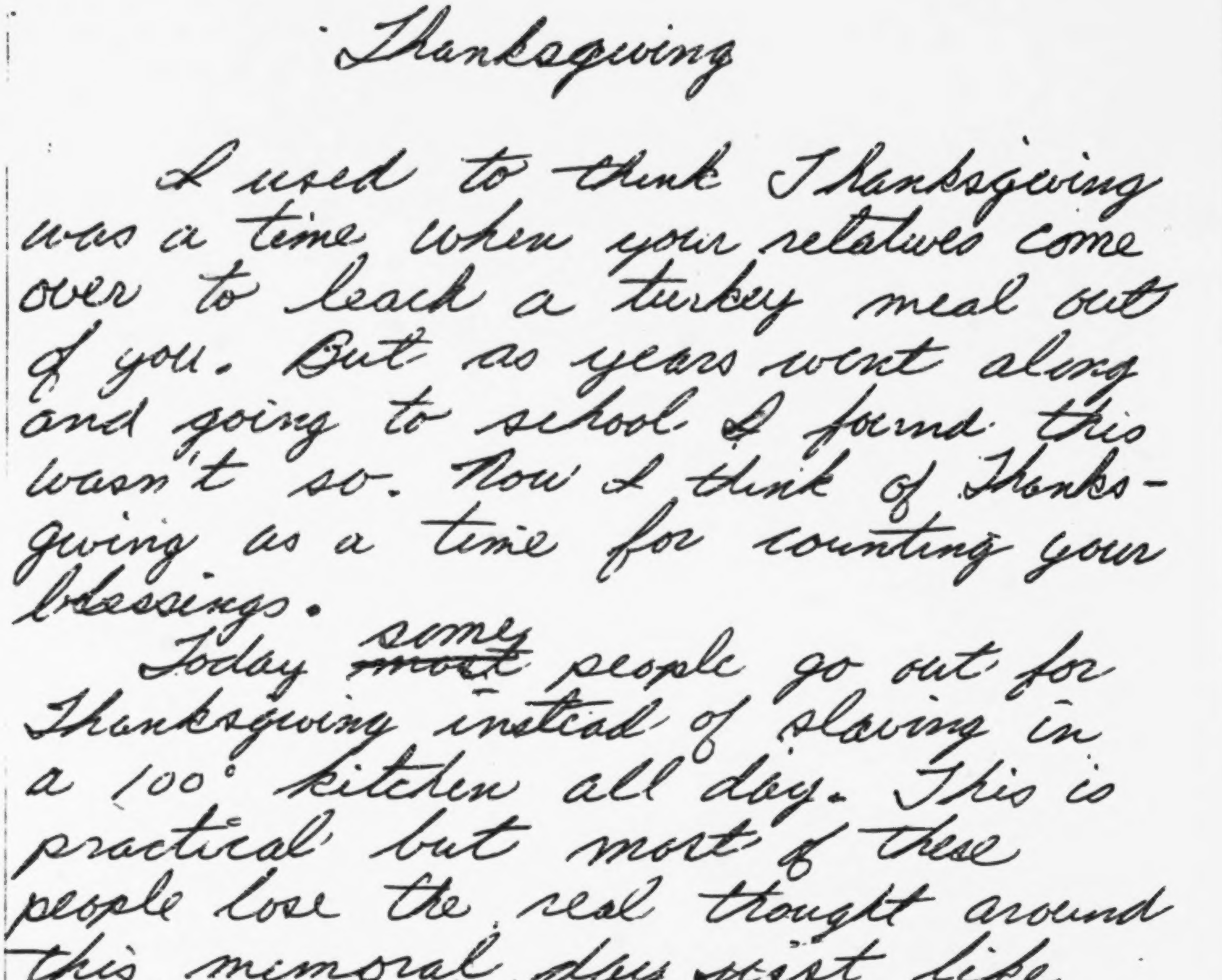


Thanksgiving 1965

Thanksgiving is ~~the~~ time of the year when all ~~my relatives would meet at my grandmothers.~~ Well here it is another Thanksgiving and to me it means many "things". On this Thanksgiving day all of my close relatives and very distant relatives get together at my grandmothers house. I don't know if you could call it Tradition or not, but as long as I can remember everyone just simply came. As a young boy and even now that I'm older I still remember ~~how all~~ my aunts would bring food, that they had already made at home, and help my grandmother prepare the main course. They would stay in the kitchen and wouldn't allow any man or boy to step in the kitchen. The men didn't care anyway because they would be setting in the front watching the football game or just talking about the "good old days".

After dinner it would be just about the same thing with the men lounging in the front and the women cleaning in the kitchen. And as the people left I always remember my uncles saying how ~~too~~ tired they were, even though they [illegible] ~~didn't~~ do a thing.

Figure 2



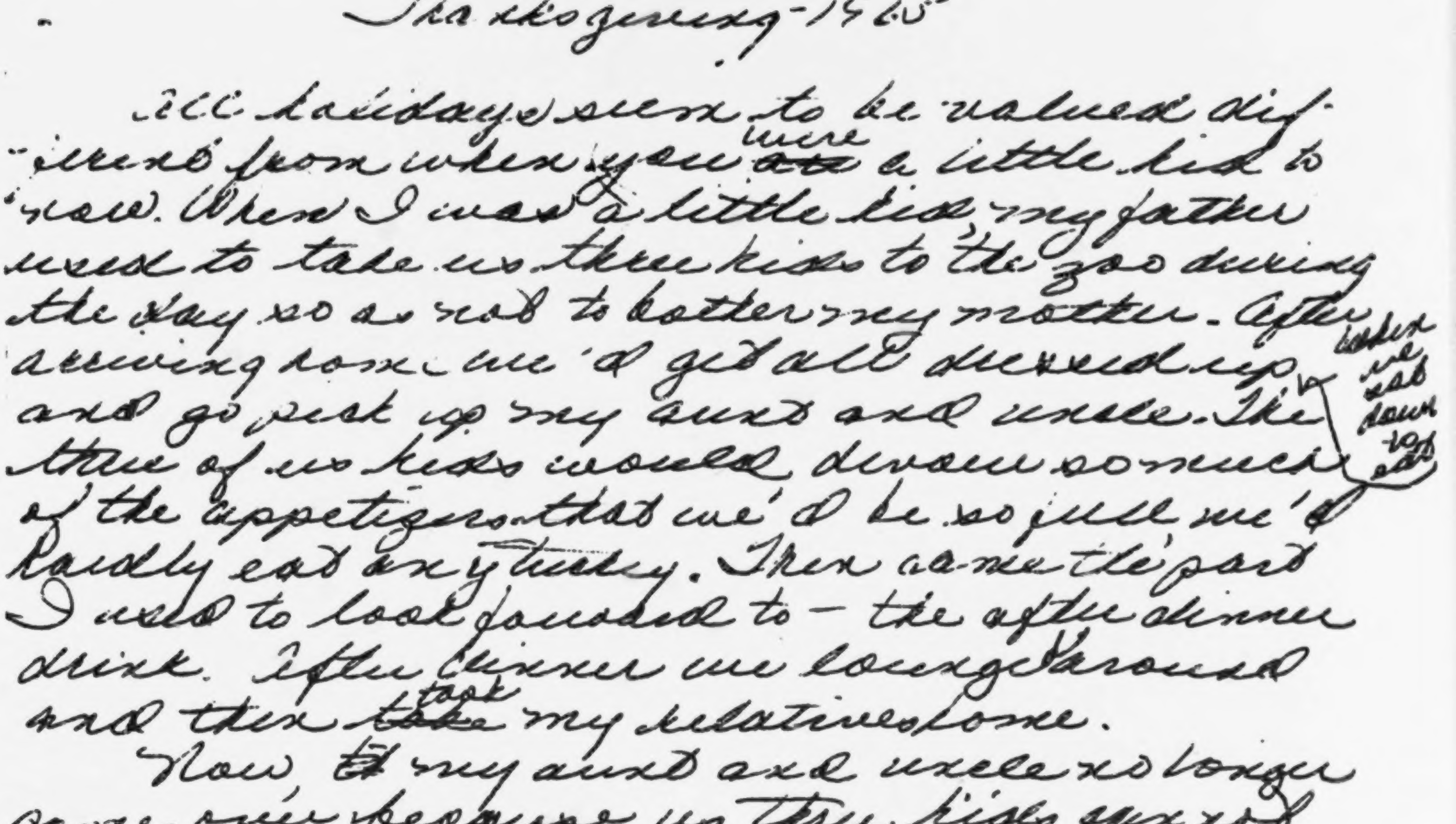
Thanksgiving

I used to think Thanksgiving was a time when your relatives come over to leach a turkey meal out of you. But as years went along and going to school I found this wasn't so. Now I think of Thanksgiving as a time for counting your blessings.

Today ~~most~~ some people go out for Thanksgiving instead of slaving in a 100° kitchen all day. This is practical but most of these people lose the real thought around this memoral day just like Christmas.

Staying home and eating your dinner with your relatives surrounded amoung you is a lot ~~solm~~ more solemn than eating out. For years our family gathered either at our house or my aunts house, and Just before our dinner someone would say a prayer about Thanksgiving which ~~me~~ would remind us why we were ~~eating~~ having this meal.

Figure 3



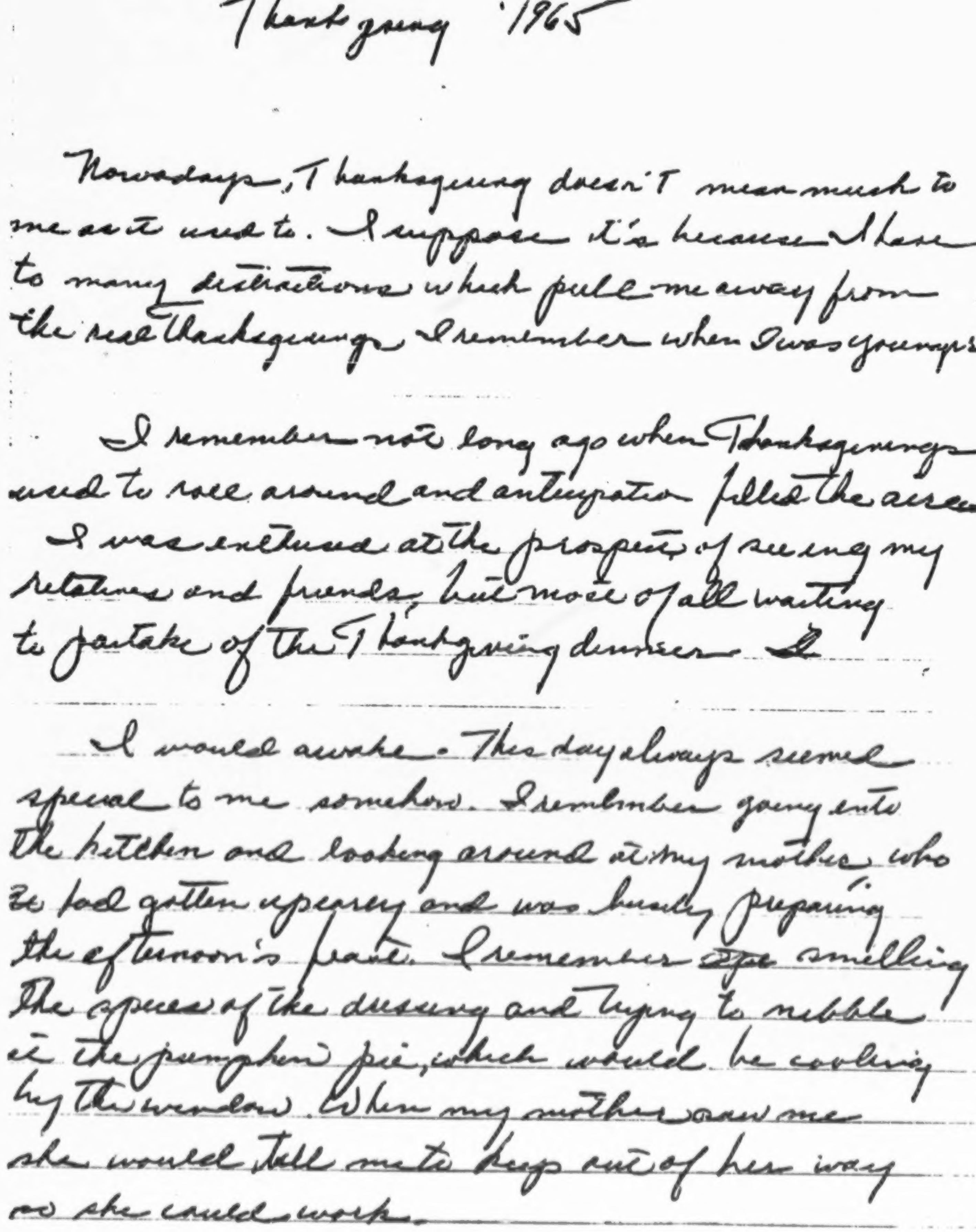
Thanksgiving - 1965

All holidays seem to be valued different from when you ~~are~~ were a little kid to now. When I was a little kid, my father used to take us three kids to the zoo during the day so as not to bother my mother. After arriving home we'd get all dressed up and go pick up my aunt and uncle. The three of us kids would devour so much of the appetizers that we'd be so full we'd hardly eat any turkey. Then came the part I used to look forward to - the after dinner drink. After dinner we lounged around and then ~~take~~ took my relatives home.

when we sat down to eat

Now, ~~th~~ my aunt and uncle no longer come over because us three kids can not tolerate him; ~~we~~ we don't lounge around after dinner as we all go out our separate ways. My mother no longer makes all the appetizers she used to because they're fattening, and my father doesn't ask us to go to the zoo any more. He fears we'll turn him down because we'll feel we're too old. As ~~for~~ for dressing up, I wear a sweat shirt and cut-offs! And the part I used to look forward to - the cordial - I can have any time I want so even that - as all other parts of Thanksgivings are a drag.

Figure 4



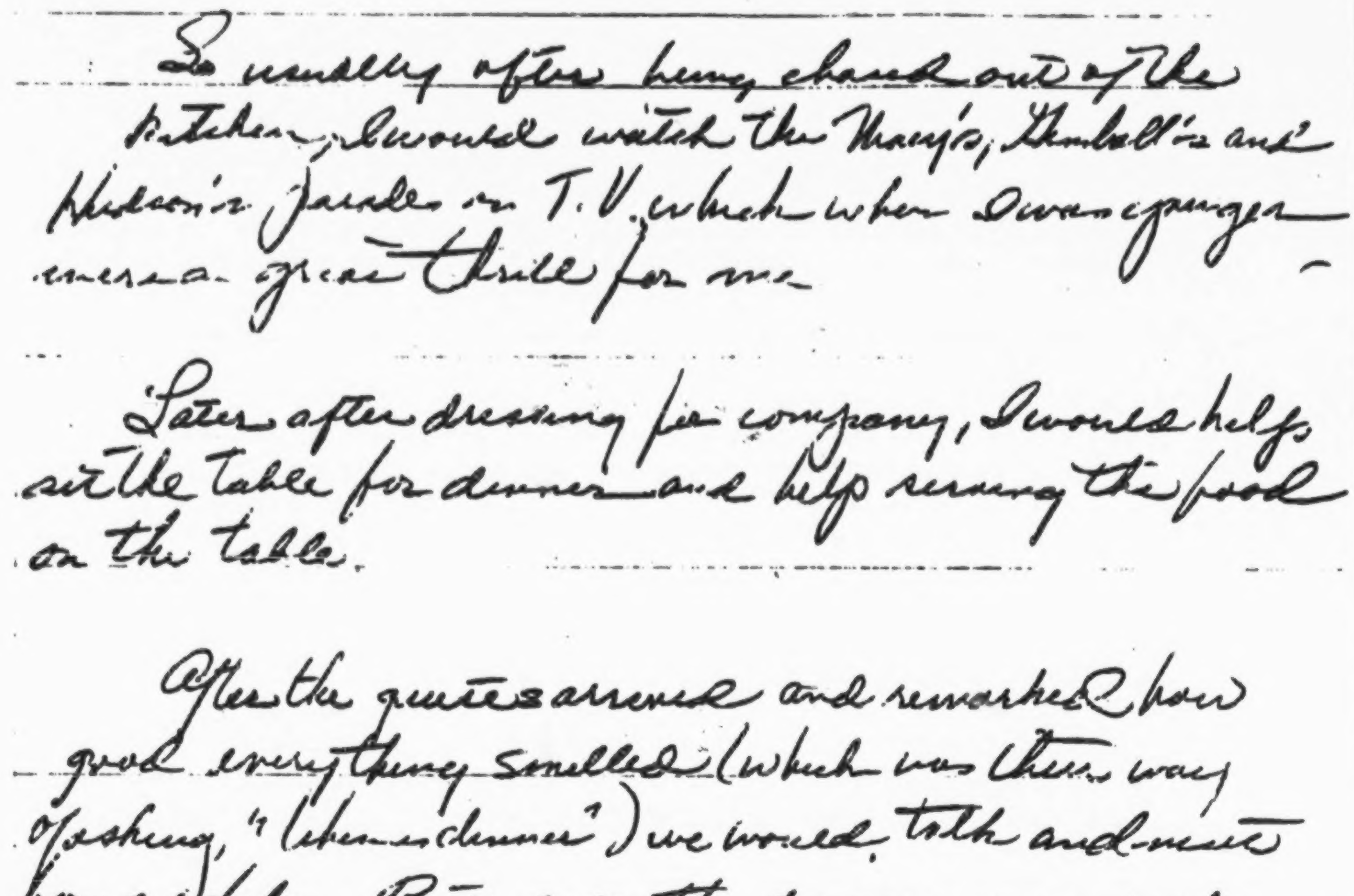
Thanksgiving 1965

Nowadays, Thanksgiving doesn't mean much to me as it used to. I suppose it's because I have to many distractions which pull me away from the real thanksgiving I remember when I was younger.

I remember not long ago when Thanksgivings used to roll around and anticipation filled the air. I was enthused at the prospect of seeing my relatives and friends, but most of all waiting to partake of the Thanksgiving dinner. I

I would awake. This day always seemed special to me somehow. I remember going into the kitchen and looking around at my mother who he had gotten up early and was busily preparing the afternoon's feast. I remember ~~[illegible]~~ smelling the spices of the dressing and trying to nibble at the pumpkin pie, which would be cooling by the window. When my mother saw me she would tell me to keep out of her way so she could work.

Figure 5a



So usually after being chased out of the kitchen, I would watch the Macy's, Gimbell's and Hudson's parades on T.V. which when I was younger were a great thrill for me.

Later after dressing for company, I would help set the table for dinner and help serving the food on the table.

After the guests arrived and remarked how good everything smelled (which was their way of asking, "When is dinner") we would talk and visit for a while. But soon the dinner was ready and mother would f. bring out the golden bird and all the trimmings that we all know go with Thanksgiving

But before we ate, we always gave special thanks for all the wonderful things we have and the wonderful land we live in and for the many, many things we have to be thankful for. And at that moment, even now, when I am older, I know this is the real meaning of Thanksgiving.

Figure 5b

IV SUMMARY

Basing its work on investigation of school practices and analysis of the writing process in relation to children, the Northwestern Curriculum Study Center has developed a core curriculum in composition for grades seven through ten, supplemented by units on specialized topics in composition, suitable for grades eleven and twelve.

Lessons for seventh and eighth grades (ten in observation and analysis, classification and individualization; seven in reporting impressions) are based on an assumption similar to that of Pestalozzian object teaching in the nineteenth century; namely, that children's growth through using language (and in practical uses of language) may be encouraged by practice in thinking concretely and specifically. In the ninth and tenth grade lessons (three introducing the writing process, seven on reporting, eleven on analysis, ten on evaluation) observation is extended to reflection; this development is also found in Pestalozzian method. These principles were the basis for three special sets of lessons (thirty-two in all) which were developed for use with disadvantaged fourth grade children.

Throughout, the lessons are planned as illustrations of the various stages in the writing process, especially those prior to actual "writing-down." The attempt is to explore writing as an art, a process, accomplishment in which may give children intrinsic satisfaction.

Observation and testimony suggest strongly that the method of the lessons does lead children to come to make writing a meaningful part of their experience. There may also be some increase in the accuracy of their writing; but since "improvement of the child's use of language" was not one of the interests at the Center, no attempt to measure it was made. Testing of the core curriculum showed that there was significant experimental treatment effect for the use of classifying and individualizing details. No effect was registered for other criteria. Again, however, the implication of the testing seemed to be that conventional means of measurement or criteria of competence and excellence are not presently refined enough to take account of individual capacities; perhaps they are not even relevant.

No attempt was made to create an evaluation instrument for the project investigating the use of the fourth grade lessons. A sample of papers from experimental and control groups was read impressionistically. The conclusion was that the papers of children in the experimental group showed greater expressiveness and a much closer connection with the lives of the children.

APPENDIX I

Organization of the Curriculum Center in English

I. The Curriculum Center in English is funded by the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Office of Education, under a "Project English" research contract authorized by the Act of July 26, 1954, 68 Stat. 533.

II. Organizational Pattern

A. Administrative Committee

The Administrative Committee is responsible for budget and personnel. Its members, both of whom sit on the Committee by virtue of office, are the Dean of Education (presently Mr. Chandler) and the Chairman of English (presently Mr. Hagstrum). The Committee reports to Dean Wild who represents the University Administration.

B. Policy Committee

The Policy Committee is responsible for considering and shaping the substantive work of the Center. The Co-Directors of the Center present to the Policy committee proposals for work and study. Present membership of the Policy Committee is as follows:

1. Mr. William Brink, School of Education
2. Mr. Wallace Douglas, Department of English

3. Mr. Harrison Hayford, Department of English
4. Mr. William Hunt, Psychology Department
5. Mr. Eldridge McSwain, School of Education
6. Mr. Ernest Samuels, Department of English
7. Mr. Michael Usdan, School of Education
8. Mr. Ernest Wrage, Communications Department (Speech)

Membership on the Policy Committee is by invitation of the Administrative Committee.

C. Advisory Council

Each Adviser is invited to identify to the Co-Directors problems needing study, to consider materials produced by the Center, and to represent the Center to his teaching colleagues.

A current membership list of Advisers is attached.

Membership on the Council is by invitation of the superintendent of schools of the cooperating system.

D. Co-Directors

The Co-Directors are responsible for accomplishing the work approved and prescribed by the Policy Committee.

The Co-Directors will take to the Policy Committee those issues presented by the Advisers and those issues of the English curriculum being debated in the schools, colleges, and in public.

The Co-Directors (presently Mr. Dunning from the School of Education and Mr. Hagstrum from the Department of English) are appointed by the Administrative Committee. They sit as ex officio members of the Policy Committee.

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APPENDIX II

Visitation Calendar and Curriculum Center in English Bulletins

VISITATION CALENDAR

April 4, 1962	Niles Township High Schools
April 11, 1962	Evanston Township High School
April 12, 1962	New Trier Township High School
April 19, 1962	Oak Park-River Forest High School
April 25, 1962	Glenbrook High School
May 2, 1962	Hyde Park High School
May 8, 1962	Senn High School
May 10, 1962	Maine Township High Schools
May 16, 1962	Ridgewood Community High School
May 21, 1962	Winnetka Junior High School
May 23, 1962	Evanston Junior High School
May 24, 1962	Curriculum Bureau, Chicago Board of Education

CURRICULUM CENTER IN ENGLISH

Bulletin Number 1.

On April 4, 1962, Dean E. T. McSwain and Mr. J. H. Hagstrum visited the Niles Township High Schools, East and West. They conferred with Clyde Parker, the superintendent; Stuart Anderson, the assistant superintendent and coordinator of the curriculum; George Gilluly, assistant principal, East, and J. Keith Kavanaugh, principal, West; and Katherine Kennedy, head of the English Department, West, and Daniel Albright, head of the English Department, East. The comments of these officials consisted of (1) ringing statements that expressed approval of our aims and (2) specific suggestions for study and discussion. The latter were more important, but the accolades showed great appreciation that something fairly comprehensive was being undertaken in this area.

The Accolades

1. Northwestern has seized a strategic moment to look at the entire English curriculum. Society is making some trenchant criticisms, and the schools are now aware that improvement is needed. Comparatively poor performance in English on the National Merit tests makes the high school people feel that even the best students need more or better attention in English (Parker).

2. The opportunities for mutual evaluation are great. Since schools like Niles employ its graduates, the University could find out exactly how well its products do. And the schools could, in a curriculum center, have something to say about the training of their future teachers (Anderson).

3. A joint visit to a high school by an Education Dean and English Chairman is the first hopeful sign that genuine improvement will in fact take place (Parker).

4. A new and separate entity like a curriculum center--composed of representatives from the university, the high schools, the junior high schools, and perhaps even the elementary schools but not identified exclusively with the provincial interests of any one of these groups--could have great authority in making recommendations. Spending $5000.00 on writing a curriculum in and for one school alone has been a frustrating experience. Attempting articulation between one high school and the junior high schools that serve it has been useful; but the preliminary results need to be studied now by a larger, abler, more representative group than any one school can possible provide. In many other

areas of concern a curriculum center might be able to improve and complete work that is now being done sporadically and locally (Kavanaugh, Albright).

5. The schools will co-operate in sending materials to the center and in granting leaves to anyone who works in it.

The Suggestions

1. Even though the center may concentrate on grades seven through fourteen, it should neglect neither the elementary grades nor teacher training in the junior, senior, and graduate years (Parker, Anderson).

2. Close attention should be paid to "articulation" between junior and senior high schools and between junior high schools and the grades. Work now being done at Niles should be carried farther (everybody).

3. Graduated sheets (or handbooks) of minumum essentials in writing and marking papers should be placed in the hands of all students and all faculty. Niles wants to train all teachers of whatever subject in how to teach reading and writing and would like to get all the departments to co-operate in the improving of composition. The school needs assistance in formulating the standards and in preparing materials to be placed in the hands of every teacher (Anderson).

4. Spelling needs attention. Everyone complains that it is not being properly taught but no one seems to know very much about what is being or ought to be done (Parker).

5. Present requirements of the term paper need attention. Niles requires a senior research paper but is not persuaded of its value. Should the process be broken down and made sequential? Should systematic training in note-taking in making bibliographies and footnotes, precede the actual writing (Kennedy)?

6. Skill in reading is absolutely basic, but many students obviously capable of good work seemed to have missed opportunities somewhere in the third grade. Elementary schools should consider adding reading experts to their staffs (Kennedy).

7. Grammar is apparently taught with confusion of aim, few standards, and no sense of sequence (Kennedy).

8. Present tests to determine progress in reading and writing are unsatisfactory (everybody).

9. There should be some--but not too much--theoretical discussion of what the curriculum should be. Should it be a spiral that rises with the growth of the child? Or a series of limited objectives for each grade? If no consensus is possible, discussion should be terminated and specific projects undertaken (Albright).

10. There should be a revision of the present ninth and tenth grade manuals on how to mark papers (Albright).

J. H. Hagstrum

CURRICULUM CENTER IN ENGLISH

Bulletin Number 2

On April 11, 1962, Dean McSwain and Mr. Hagstrum visited the Evanston Township High School and conferred with its superintendent, Lloyd Michael, and the chairman of its English department, Clarence Hach.

Both men strongly supported the aims of a curriculum center in English at Northwestern and pledged their co-operation. If they were more reserved in their praise than the Niles Township High School, it was perhaps because they are farther along in their own curriculum development and feel fully entitled to be teacher as well as pupil.

They emphasized that there was great diversity among 17 co-operating schools, that schools were too far apart in standards of excellence to be treated alike, and that Evanston regarded itself as one of the leaders. Mr. Hach described his own very active curriculum committee, which meets during the first period every day and has recently produced curricular materials--a sequential curriculum in composition, for example, and one in the mechanics of language. The committee is now at work on a sequential program in literature. It is apparent that the Evanston Township High School may contribute more than it learns, but it is perfectly willing that its own programs be made available to our center for further study and refinement.

Some of the Evanston recommendations concerned the philosophy of the English curriculum. Both Michael and Hach urged a conference on the theory of the curriculum. Like Albright of Niles, they felt hidden assumptions should be brought to the light and that English departments in this area should be forced to define their objectives. Impulses to this kind of thought might best come from a conference or a series of conferences devoted to curricular theory--seminars and lectures in which able representatives of divergent theories would be brought together. Michael and Hach did not suggest that we should impose a philosophy on the schools--only that we should do all we can to stimulate thought about basic principles.

Hach was very keen on looking into the teaching of language in the grades and in high school, to answer such questions as these: What is the place of semantics? How can grammar be made to serve composition? What is the relation of reading to grammar, even of belles-lettres to grammar? What is a functional approach to grammar? Should it be taught as a separate subject, or should it always be related to reading and writing?

Michael, a seasoned administrator and a realist, said that it was out of the question to think now of small classes for everybody in English. Therefore, emphasis must be put on new techniques. If machines can be justified, they should be used, and a determined effort to recruit English teachers should be made. Admitting that such matters might not be directly the concern of a curriculum center, he nevertheless thought they should be very much on our minds.

Both Michael and Hach felt that not enough attention had been given to the relation of the English curriculum to the combined studies program that is given in the junior high schools and in the first two years of the senior high schools and that unites social science and/or world history with English. We do not now train enough people in this combination. If it seems likely to remain on the landscape, then more thought has to be given to the preparation of teachers for these particular courses.

Not all of the suggestions were so broad or so much concerned with basic philosophy or with administration. The following specific suggestions about the problems to be solved were made.

(1) A program for the slow learner should be worked out (Hach). Admittedly the basic problem is to secure the properly trained and motivated teacher, but curricular considerations also arise. We need to develop a philosophy of education in English for the slow learner--in fact, the whole problem needs to be studied ab ovo.

(2) A project on the use of the dictionary seemed feasible. Hach suggested that such a topic might at some time or other be programmed for one of the many learning machines now in operation.

(3) The notion described in the first bulletin--that English departments should develop a sheet of minimum essentials on how to teach reading and how to teach and mark compositions--won support. Everyone agreed that teaching English was to some extent the task of the entire institution. But how can the English department impart its skills and standards to its colleagues? This very practical problem ought to be studied in a curriculum center.

(4) English C45, the course devoted to the training of teachers, ought to be given for two quarters--one quarter perhaps devoted to the problems of the junior high school and the other those of the senior high school. The resources of a curriculum center might usefully serve such college courses.

(5) The emphasis on composition was regarded as entirely just.

a. Models for correction are needed. The Evanston High School has produced such models that could be made available to the center. But this kind of material needs to be developed for various grade levels.

b. The grading of papers should be closely related to a graduated curriculum in composition. Most teachers mark all deficiencies--without regard to what has been covered in the classroom.

c. Something has to be done to motivate both the student and teacher of composition. The problem is complex. For the students its roots go back to the grades. For the teacher many unknown causes operate. But the problem should be considered in its entirety.

Michael and Hach agreed that the needs were great. Even students who otherwise rate very high in English are embarrassingly weak in composition.

Because the need is so great, an excellent school like the Evanston Township High School is willing to do all it can to make the curriculum center a success. It has much to gain, perhaps even more to contribute. It is not unaware of its responsibilities to a larger community. It will co-operate in releasing expert teachers for whatever task needs to be done and in sending us materials from its rich store.

J. H. Hagstrum

CURRICULUM CENTER IN ENGLISH

Bulletin Number 3

On April 12, 1962, Dean McSwain and Mr. Hagstrum visited New Trier Township High School and conferred with Robert H. Carpenter, dean of the faculty, and Messrs. Boyd Guest, Joseph McCloskey, and Leonard Schweitzer, of the English department. The Superintendent, William Cornog, was occupied with board meetings all day, and Mr. Peterson, the chairman of the English department, was out of the city. Dean McSwain and I plan to invite these two officials to our campus, to continue the discussion that we began with members of their staff.

The men we conferred with seemed a bit inhibited by the absence of their administrative superiors, but they all agreed to supply us (1) with names of people qualified to co-operate and (2) specific suggestions for projects that might be undertaken.

Some of the suggestions made at Niles and Evanston were discussed here. The theory of curriculum should be the subject of study and talk. (New Trier will itself very soon discuss Bruner's Process of Education and the spiral theory of the curriculum.) A project on the dictionary might be undertaken at once. The teaching of grammar, particularly in the seventh and eighth grades, should by all means be studied. (Professor Sledd's appearances at New Trier have encouraged the faculty to think that something sensible can be done for language-study. One of the most attractive features of the Northwestern proposal is the inclusion of the junior high school, where the need for systematic and graduated curricula is especially pressing.)

A number of suggestions were made that had not been made earlier.

(1) Close liaison should be established with the Commission on English, which is now concerned with end-of-the-year examinations. The Commission should be asked to make available its recommendations on sequential tests in English for further study and for evaluation after use (McCloskey).

(2) Co-operation with the MAT program is important. New Trier, which has already appointed some of our candidates, is concerned that their preparation be related to high-school needs (Schweitzer).

(3) The curriculum center should issue a bulletin periodically, to inform the schools of developments that are taking place

here and elsewhere (Schweitzer).

(4) The center should prepare a practical manual, to be placed in the hands of practice teachers, informing them about what to expect and instructing them in basic proprieties.

(5) Although reading and literature have not been thought of as primary aims of the center, attention needs to be given to these matters. How should a novel or a story or a lyrical poem be taught? When should the concept of genre be confronted? Can there be a sensible and uniform gradation of standards in literature (McCloskey)?

(6) At New Trier there is no prescription of a research paper, but there is concern that consistent advice be given the high schools about this matter.

J. H. Hagstrum

CURRICULUM CENTER IN ENGLISH

Bulletin Number 4

On Thursday, April 19, 1962, Dean McSwain and Messrs. Brink and Hagstrum visited the Oak Park and River Forest High School. They met with Mr. Kenneth Lund, the superintendent, alone and then with Mr. Lund and several members of the English department for a long morning session and for lunch.

It soon became apparent that Oak Park--a school unafraid of experiment--will have much to contribute in information and skill based on varied experience. Its large department of English (34) teaches courses to groups classified by ability. These groupings begin in the freshman year and continue, in very complicated ways, through the senior year. The Oak Park High School attempts many kinds of composition--in connection with its courses in English and American literature and in separate courses. One of the librarians devotes part of her time to teaching English and part of her time to collecting materials in English for the library. She serves on the curriculum committee of the department and relates its work to the acquisition of books and studies for the library. Under the energetic direction of Mr. Kermit Dehl, the school runs a most ambitious program in what it calls developmental reading. 300 students enroll every summer between the eighth grade and high school in non-credit reading courses. Later on, students may elect a similar course in the improvement of reading once during the second two years. (For these electives there is always a waiting list, so high is the motivation.) Oak Park is fed by K-8 schools as well as by junior high schools, and therefore has had experience in teaching students of diverse preparation. Oak Park has language laboratories, a reading laboratory, a library that is physically divided by subject matter, and a complex and ambitious program of study periods based on the specific and changing needs of the student.

Oak Park may prove to be a seed-bed of ideas.

Members of the English department--Miss Nina Smith, the chairman, Mr. James Berkeley, Mrs. King, and Mrs. Helen Barclay--discussed with some enthusiasm two possible programs for the curriculum center.

(1) The Oak Park department has encouraged members of its composition staff to hand in detailed descriptions of assignments that have worked well. It plans to pass these out to all its members. This file of suggested topics and assignments ought to be made available to the curriculum center. It could of course be augmented by materials from other schools, and when properly sorted and classified, with successful examinations added to successful assignments, it might prove useful to this area and perhaps also to the nation.

(2) Oak Park was especially keen on developing a program that will enlist the entire faculty in teaching English. Members of other departments might become interested and even committed if they were asked to help prepare and revise statements of standards. Mr. Lund was especially enthusiastic: he felt it was important for English departments not only to set standards for other departments but also to consider the needs of other fields in composition and reading.

Ideas discussed at other schools were also discussed here. We should consider the theory of the curriculum. The routine part of English should be separated from the philosophical side and should, on the analogy with typing, be taught in ways appropriate to a mechanical skill. We should learn from the experience of those who have prepared the science curricula. Courses in physics, chemistry, biology, and mathematics came in separate packages. Not enough thought had been given to the relation and order of facts or to the practical needs of the high schools.

J. H. Hagstrum

CURRICULUM CENTER IN ENGLISH

Bulletin Number 5

On April 25, 1962, Messrs. McSwain and Hagstrum met with the following officials at the Glenbrook High School: N. B. Watson, superintendent; Syd Salt, principal Glenbrook South; Francis M. Trusty, principal Glenbrook North; and Charles B. Ruggless, chairman of the English department.

Because the chairman of the English department was outnumbered by administrative officials, most of the suggestions concerned administration rather than the curriculum.

Mr. Salt felt that the curriculum center should not disdain practical matters. It should prepare a list of specialists in the area with a brief description of their specialties. It might even describe the audio-visual resources appropriate to the English curriculum. It should be concerned with problems of scheduling and should perform the service of improving and even distributing job descriptions.

Mr. Trusty hoped the English profession would be as ambitious as the scientists and apply serious and seminal thought to the English curriculum. He hoped that differences between English and science would not obscure important precedents set by the scientists. English teachers should be bold in trying new teaching devices, in setting standards, in exercising leadership.

Mr. Watson, though extremely sympathetic to our aims, urged us to be realistic and cautious about certain matters. It may be extremely difficult, for example, to get released time from the junior high schools and the elementary schools. He agreed that it was important to consider the relations of high schools and junior high schools but urged us not to be under any illusions of immediate success. The problem is sociologically complex. The Glenbrook High School is fed by several tributaries: five elementary schools, five school districts with junior high schools, several parochial schools (Catholic, Lutheran, and even Swedenborgian). Work has been done under the direction of Ruggless on "articulation" between the Glenbrook High School and the schools that feed it, and what materials they have prepared will be sent to us. Ruggless, although conceding the difficulties, felt hopeful about an objective study undertaken by a disinterested organization like the curriculum center.

Ruggless, although extremely cautious about committing himself to any particular program, has followed the project from the beginning, has conferred with its national director, and says that there are many, many problems that need attention.

He insisted that no one has yet come up with anything remarkable in composition. What has been done so far consists only of the most abstract principles, which in themselves are not very useful. Clarence Hach of the Evanston High School has probably done as much as anybody in working toward a sequential curriculum in composition. Ruggless agrees with Hach that students of median talent--the great middle class in English--need attention.

Ruggless described his curriculum in some detail; but since the high school will send its course plans to the curriculum center, there is no need in summarizing what he said.

Next year Glenbrook High School is taking several important steps. Each teacher of English will teach four, not five, classes. The classes for students of low ability will consist of no more than 19 to 20 per class; the middle group will have 25 to 26 per class, and the brightest students will meet 29 to 32 per class. One hour a day will be devoted to helping those who are weak in composition--in something like a laboratory situation. Lay readers will no longer be used. Glenbrook believes they were not close enough to the students.

J. H. Hagstrum

CURRICULUM CENTER IN ENGLISH

Bulletin Number 6

On May 2nd, Dean E. T. McSwain and W. W. Douglas visited Hyde Park High School. They talked with Mr. Curtis Melnick, Assistant Superintendent in Charge of District 14, Mr. Arthur Lehne, Principal of Hyde Park High School, and Mrs. Alta M. Farr, Chairman of the English Department at Hyde Park High School. It was a very stimulating and interesting meeting.

Mrs. Farr described the Experimental English Program, which is based on the so-called Rutgers plan. The program has been in effect for only about one year, so that its results are still somewhat uncertain. It seems probable that the Curriculum Center might make use of the evaluation tests which the high school has devised for the program.

Later Mrs. Farr mentioned certain problems which she thought the Center might consider. One was an investigation of the teaching of English in elementary schools. She thought it especially important to consider the effect of the way the various divisions of the language arts are presented to elementary school pupils, in a group as it were. Another suggestion concerned the development of objective standards of proficiency in English. Mrs. Farr also mentioned the need for textbooks for older students who are reading at the 6th grade level. She felt too, that a composition course for such students needs to be planned.

Mr. Melnick suggested that teachers would profit very much if they could have access to a description of the curriculum of various schools. He also approved the emphasis that the Center would give to studying the teaching of composition.

Mr. Lehne spoke very impressively about the service that Hyde Park offers to the Hyde Park-Kenwood-Woodlawn community. He is especially interested in having the Center consider the teaching of the culturally deprived student. He, too, was interested in the standardization or at least definition of achievement levels. He thinks that means of improving the mechanics of the paper reading process needs to be developed; he wonders if teachers are taking more time than is really necessary on papers. He would very much like to have the Center consider the relation of reading and composition and the use of the library to improve the teaching of composition. He thinks it would be useful to consider what clerical and mechanical aids are available or could be developed to help English teachers.

W. W. Douglas

CURRICULUM CENTER IN ENGLISH

Bulletin Number 7

On May 10 Dean McSwain and W. W. Douglas visited Senn High School. Present were M. Benedict Amar, Principal of Senn High School; Miss Katherine Brennan, Assistant Principal, in charge of curriculum; Miss Grace Lundahl, Chairman of the English Department, and Mrs. Ruth Hoffmeyer, consultant in language arts in the Bureau of Curriculum Development.

The discussion was lengthy; much of it seemed directed towards explanation of the mechanics of various programs (team teaching, etc.) in the school. The following suggestions did, however, emerge.

From Mr. Amar: There is some need to "settle" the current controversy (provoked by the new edition of the International, at least in his mind) over preserving the language. Considering some of the remarks made, it does seem that there might well be some work on the general problem of defining linguistic standards;

There is real need to study the effect of scheduling, or rather to investigate ways of taking work in English language arts out of the rigid 40-45 minute "period"; (in the Chicago "Basic" English course, work is scheduled in double periods for the freshman year);

Teachers need a list of literary selections that are useful in teaching composition, and also some more systematic understanding of how a literary work can be useful in teaching composition;

Considerable work should be done on mechanical aids: tapes, projectors, etc.

From Miss Lindahl: The needs of "average" students need to be investigated;

The use of clerical aids should be investigated and developed.

From Mrs. Hoffmeyer: A great and very important need is to develop materials for teaching the "culturally deprived"--too many books are too rigidly class-bound to the experience and values of white, middle-class groups;

The Center should develop a list of qualified graduate students who could become lay-readers; perhaps also should survey the methods and results of the various lay-reader programs in this area; administrators need proof of the value of the program;

Teachers need a firmer notion of what "errors" students at what levels should be penalized for;

Perhaps a floating lab for English classes, like those used in foreign languages, should be developed.

W. W. Douglas

CURRICULUM CENTER IN ENGLISH

Bulletin Number 8

The visit of Dean McSwain and Mr. Hagstrum to Maine Township High School on May 10 provoked one of the liveliest discussions they have had so far. They met with Earl Wiltse, the superintendent, and Ralph Frost, the assistant superintendent; William Ludolph, chairman of Maine High School West, and Robert Baker, chairman of Maine High School East; Herman Rider, principal of Maine West, and Milo Johnston, principal of Maine East; and Mrs. Ruth Given a teacher of English. Each of these contributed perspicuous suggestions.

The Maine High Schools--apparently very lively places!--are doing on their own some of the things proposed elsewhere for our curriculum center. They have already started to cooperate with junior high schools in developing vocabulary and dictionary studies. They are working out an ambitious program in developmental reading. For the first year they have prepared a program in development of vocabulary, speed, and comprehension in reading, not only for English but for science, history, civics, and other subjects. For the second year they have made an analysis of study habits and related what they have found directly to the reading program. For the third year they plan to develop a series of films on reading, which will be shown to parents. For the fourth year they hope to prepare recommendations for fast (comprehensive) and slow (critical) reading. They expect these recommendations to affect all the teachers, all the students, and the entire community. Maine expressed a desire to help make the curriculum center at Northwestern a place full of interesting information. They themselves have much to contribute.

The conferees made several specific proposals that had not been made elsewhere--or at least were made here with greater emphasis.

(1) Abundant opportunity should be provided at the curriculum center for discussion--on the assumption that thought is as important as research. English chairmen from the area should get together periodically and consider deeply what is being studied. They should also share information on other matters, for example, on how the lay-reader program is working out nationally and locally. High school teachers interested in the same local projects should be brought together periodically to talk over what they are doing. Most important of all, the school superintendents--not their representatives, but the superintendents themselves!--should be brought together in conferences at periodical intervals. Since they are

in a position to influence legislators, teachers, and the electorate, they should be intimately involved in the English curriculum.

(2) Someone from Northwestern of prestige and experience should systematically collect information on what is now being done in the schools. He should prepare a detailed report of what he finds and disseminate it to all the schools in the area.

(3) The impromptu theme might be made the subject of a special project. The University of Illinois defends the theme on unannounced topics; others say it accomplishes little.

(4) Those who fail in English should be made the subject of special study. Much is being done in remedial courses, but very little for those who have slightly higher abilities but choose not to use them. How can these students be motivated to develop appropriate skills? Why have they become failures? Should they be given the special attention the remedial groups get?

(5) English laboratories should be developed. The need is not satisfied by the reading laboratory alone. An electronic center that all might use should have a section devoted specifically to materials for all parts of English. Students should listen to themselves speak and learn to analyze their faults in this way. Film strips should be available of themes being assigned, dicussed, and corrected. (The importance of speech to writing is universally recognized, but little is done to make speech contribute directly to written expression. Electronic devices might be of some use.)

(6) Has enough attention been paid to the grades given in English, particularly in English composition. How do they figure in arousing interest, in encouraging--or discouraging--students?

The representatives of Maine Township High School were not afraid of the toughest problems. They called for considerable discussion of ends as well as means. They seemed to lean to the notion of the sequential, cummulative curriculum. But they agreed that the definition of appropriate ends for each grade must be developed locally, empirically, and gradually--after habits of cooperation have been established in particular projects and perhaps even after research has been completed on matters about which we do not now have sufficient information. They urged that we learn the lesson of the scientists, who worked together and produced impressive results. But those results may have come too fast and may not have taken into account the realities of high-school life.

The administrators agreed that qualified people would be released for projects that seemed necessary and promising.

J. H. Hagstrum

CURRICULUM CENTER IN ENGLISH

Bulletin Number 9

On May 16th Dean McSwain and W. W. Douglas visited the Ridgewood High School in Norridge. They had a long and most fruitful conversation with Eugene R. Howard, superintendent.

Mr. Howard was very enthusiastic about the whole idea of the Center, especially about the help it might give in planning and evaluating its non-graded, concept-centered curriculum in English. So far as the content of English instruction at Ridgewood is concerned, it seems clear that the intention will be to emphasize what may be called cross-artistic materials; that is, materials dealing with relations among the arts. Insofar as the new curriculum will be individualized, he thinks the Center may be a very important place for teachers to turn to for material to help students with their special problems in the language arts. Hence it follows that he would expect a good deal of the time of the Center to be devoted to the development of exercise material or programmed instructional sequences.

Mr. Howard also suggested that the Center could be very useful to Ridgewood in planning various laboratories (in composition, reading, and so forth) which are to be established.

W. W. Douglas

CURRICULUM CENTER IN ENGLISH

Bulletin Number 10

On Monday, May 21, Dean McSwain and Mr. Hagstrum visited the Skokie Junior High School in Winnetka. They met with the superintendent, Sidney Marland; Don Cawelti, assistant superintendent; and Mrs. Rosemary Beyer, principal of the Hubbard Woods school.

(1) Marland expressed delight that Education and English were working together and said several times that his school system is eager to contribute all it can. He quoted his own statement in a curriculum guide now being used in his school system--that the single most important skill educators can create in the student is the proper use of written English. He is happy that the Northwestern center has chosen to emphasize what he regards as absolutely crucial.

(2) Commenting on the specific proposals that have hitherto been made, Marland said that spelling was a matter of the greatest concern. His staff has already prepared a manual on spelling that is now used in his schools and that will be made available to the center for further study and refinement--as will the result of some six years of intensive study in the language arts.

(3) The superintendents in the township are so much concerned with the language arts in the grades that they had already decided to undertake a study on their own. We should be in touch with this group and co-ordinate our efforts with theirs.

(4) The schools are in especial need of help in evaluating and testing what they are doing. They themselves cannot afford experts in educational testing and experiment. They want to find out what happens when pupils are exposed to a new curriculum--what are their responses? what produces results?

(5) All things considered, grade seven is perhaps the best place to begin a survey.

J. H. Hagstrum

CURRICULUM CENTER IN ENGLISH

Bulletin Number 11

On May 23 Dean McSwain and Mr. Hagstrum visited Skiles Junior High School to meet the representatives of District 65, Evanston: Donald Grote, the principal of Skiles; Jeanne Broulette, curriculum co-ordinator (kindergarten through the sixth grade); Mrs. Lorraine Morton, chairman of the school language arts program at Nichols; and Margaret O'Brien, director of instructional services in the junior high schools.

(1) Just as colleges are concerned with high-school preparation and the high schools with junior high-school preparation, so the junior high schools are themselves concerned with the preparation in the sixth grade. Recommendations that the teachers of language arts in the seventh and eighth grades make to earlier grades should be collected and studied.

(2) Mrs. Teresa Goedsche has worked on English in the seventh and eighth grades and has given particular attention to instructional aids.

(3) The importance of using the curriculum center as a place of conference should not be underestimated. At present there are few opportunities for people interested in English to get together. People in one school find out what is done five miles away only if it is published nationally.

(4) The problems of slow learners in English should be made a matter of special study.

(5) Helen Sloane, who teaches at Foster School, has achieved a good reputation in the field of spelling.

(6) Advice from the high schools sometimes seems to the junior high schools excessively fragmented. The relation of the various parts of the language arts needs to be thought about.

J. H. Hagstrum

CURRICULUM CENTER IN ENGLISH

Bulletin Number 12

On May 25 Dean McSwain and Mr. Hagstrum visited the Chicago Board of Education. In the absence of Mrs. Evelyn F. Carlson, they spent most of the time in a long discussion with Mrs. Ruth Hoffmeyer, a consultant in English.

(1) By next fall a considerable amount of new material from Chicago will be sent to the curriculum center at Northwestern. At the very least this material might be of great interest to those suburban high schools who have problems comparable to Chicago's. At present there is virtually no liaison between the urban and the suburban high schools.

(2) The Chicago schools--at least nine of them--have experience in using lay readers. During the coming summer members of the staff will work on tests, to evaluate the success of this program.

(3) Some material about the grades will be available next fall. Grades four through eight have been studied intensively for several years. It would be important for anyone working on the junior high schools to visit four or five Chicago schools that have combined as a unit the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades: the Kinzie school (in a community of blue-collar workers with small homes), Hess school (an all-colored school, whose students

have serious emotional problems and which has very elaborately departmentalized its work in English); Spry (a school near the Harrison High School, which represents another approach to the problem that Hess faces), and Von Steuben (where motivation for study is high).

(4) A study of the dictionary should consider the vocabulary study to be put into a machine program by Diedrich of ETS.

(5) Mrs. Carlson must be consulted about released time from the Chicago system.

(6) The following people can prove helpful for particular kinds of information: Mrs. Ruth Hoffmeyer on all aspects of English; Miss Mary Lacy on curricular materials; Dr. Miriam Peterson on reading lists and textbooks; Mrs. Elizabeth Marshall on radio and TV work; Dr. Malcolm Provus for research.

J. H. Hagstrum

APPENDIX III

Cooperating Schools and Personnel
Informal Testing *Basic Lessons*
Fall, 1964

Crystal Lake Community High School 45 W. Franklin Street Crystal Lake, Illinois	Kenneth Tarpley, Chairman, English Department Pat Kidwell Margaret Marek Mike Muchmore
East Maine Junior High School Niles, Illinois	William Bullock, Asst. Supt. of Curriculum Dena Booras
Ballard School (elementary)	Janet DeVries
Elgin, Illinois	Samuel Nicholas, Principal Ellis Junior High (Coordinator) 224 S. Liberty Elgin, Illinois
Tefft Jr. High	Nancy Neve
Abbott School	Lee Tackenberg
Larson School	Paul Anderson
Kimball School	Patricia Weaver
Ellis Jr. High	Keith Sack
Glenbrook North High School Glenbrook, Illinois	Knowles Cooke, Chairman, Eng. Dept. Mary Alice Weinberg

Glenview Community Consolidated Schools	Robert L. Hillerich, Asst. Supt. (Coordinator) 1215 Waukegan Road Glenview, Illinois Inez Bishop, Middle Grade Consultant
Henking School Glenview, Illinois	Glen Ottoson, Principal Kay Stroyan Carol Johnson Ronnie Cavallini Vera Thaleg Eleanore Lines Diane Bruch
Hoffman School Glenview, Illinois	H. R. Stroyan, Principal Dorothy Bredin Gail Schmidt LaVonne Sundell Dorothy Elliot Sara Wyatt Francis Bartlett Mary Burley Winetta Ottoson Carol Michelson
Glenview Junior High School Glenview, Illinois	Myrtle Rugen, Principal Lorraine Bijak Marjorie Demorest Lorraine Peterson
Nichols Junior High School Evanston, Illinois	Thomas Sinks, Principal Richard Pace Josephine Roane
Avoca Junior High School Wilmette, Illinois	Marie Murphy, Principal Marjorie Bennett Olive Johnson Margery Finch Sue Davies
Northbrook Elementary Schools Northbrook, Illinois	John Lukas, Curriculum Director (Coordinator)
Oak Lane School Northbrook, Illinois	Joyce DeZutter Rita Kuhl
Crestwood School Northbrook, Illinois	Ruth Wallish Carol Lyman

Greenbriar School Northbrook, Illinois	Jane Stark
Northbrook Junior High School Northbrook, Illinois	Donna Odar Dorothy Thompson
Shepard School (elementary) Chicago, Illinois	Osanna Nesper
Taft High School Chicago, Illinois	Rita Hansen

APPENDIX IV

Niles Township Project
Directions for Testing and Research Report

Part 1

Dear ____________________,

I write to request your cooperation with the Northwestern Curriculum Center in English and with other teachers and administrators in the Niles Township schools. The Center is going to collect a random sample of student writing from your township.

Procedures for collecting the first of two samples are presented on the attached pages. Sample number one, an impromptu, "opinion" paper, will require no more than 30 minutes of class time on Tuesday, May 7th. A second sample, which will be a "take-home" assignment, is scheduled for May 21st.

Here are several things you should know about this sampling of student composition.

(1) We are requesting papers only from the Niles Township schools.

(2) We are giving the same assignment to students in selected classrooms in grades 6 through 10.

(3) We are interested only in students' compositions. There are to be no hidden assessments of teachers' capabilities, school curriculum organization, and the like.

(4) The papers will be used for at least two research purposes. We want the papers so that we can develop, from the realities of student writing, some lessons on language. (We do not know, however, how directly the compositions will affect those lessons.) We are also interested in having teams of readers look at the papers from the different perspectives of grammar and mechanics, organizational principles, and the "idea" content.

(5) Other research uses may emerge. Conceivably, we may ask the same students sampled this year to write again next year or, perhaps, several years from now. Against such possibilities, we shall be collecting considerable information about each student writer--such information as is available from the principal's or guidance offices. We may ask you to take ten minutes of class time later on this year and have students complete a questionnaire about books they have been reading in and out of class.

We would appreciate your help on Tuesday, May 7th, in assigning and collecting the papers described on the attached pages.

We hope this request will be as simple and as undisturbing as possible.

Instruction Sheet for In-Class Composition

Papers to be collected May 7th, 1963.

1. We would like these first papers to be "impromptu," in-class themes. Please do not go beyond the instructions given here unless some unavoidable situation arises. There should be no rewriting. Students should not be allowed to use dictionaries, reference books, or textbooks during the writing period.

2. Please do not grade or mark the themes you collect. (Should you be interested in reading what your students have written, you are encouraged to read the papers before they are picked up by a representative of the Center. The Center expects to keep the papers.)

3. Encourage students to write in ink; ask them to use for their writing only the front side of the paper provided. (Notes, outlines, ideas may be jotted down on the back of the paper.)

4. Please try to create a writing situation in which students are spending their time writing rather than asking questions, sharpening pencils, filling pens, etc. The fewer questions you have to answer, the better it will be for our purposes.

Please, as close to 10:00 a.m. as is possible, give the following assignment to your students.

(READ ALOUD) Some teachers at Northwestern are collecting papers from various classes in the Niles Township schools. They want each of you to write for fifteen minutes on a subject I'll describe in just a minute. First let me give you the paper provided by Northwestern so that you will be ready to write.

Procedure: (1) Distribute writing pages, one to each student.

(2) Check to see that each student has pen or pencil.

(READ ALOUD) Please print your name in the space provided in the upper left-hand corner. Notice that your last name comes first, your first name comes next. (Pause.) In the space alongside your name, print my last name. (Pause.) On the second line to the left, print ____________________ (the name of the school). Then complete the line, checking either "Boy" or "Girl" and giving your birthday. (Pause.)

Procedure: Before reading instructions below, be sure that each student has completed the heading.

(READ ALOUD) Before I give you the topic, I want to tell you that you will not be graded on this paper. The teachers at Northwestern are interested only in your answers and in what and how you write. Some of you may be contacted later by the Northwestern teachers. If you are contacted, it will be because what you have written has been of interest to them. Later on this year, sometime in May, I'm going to ask you for some more writing for the same people.

(READ ALOUD) Now for the topic. I want you to write a thoughtful opinion, perhaps a paragraph or two, about summer school. How much you write is not important. But you should write what you believe; you should give an honest opinion. Here are some of the things you might think about before you write. There are several kinds of summer schools, as you know. Some of you have been to summer school. Some summer schools are planned to help students catch up in their work or make up courses that they have failed. Other summer schools are planned to help students learn new things, things beyond those taught during the regular school year.

(READ ALOUD) Some parents feel that students should be in school more days each year--for example, stay in school all year except for vacations at Christmas and in the spring. Other people believe that students your age waste too much time and accomplish too little, that you do not learn as much or as rapidly as you are able. Still others, who compare American schools to schools of other countries, believe that students such as yourselves are not asked to work hard enough.

(READ ALOUD) To repeat: Your assignment is to write your opinion about summer school--whether you think it's necessary, a good idea or bad; whether you think more students should go to summer schools; whether you feel that swimming and summer jobs and vacations are so important that there should be no summer schools at all.

(READ ALOUD) I want you to write for fifteen minutes. Two minutes before the end of the writing time, I shall warn you that the time is almost up. You may want to do some thinking and planning before you write. You may make notes or jot down ideas on the back of the page I've given you. Please start work, now.

Procedure: (1) Please write here the time that students start to work: ______________.

(2) When ten minutes have elapsed, say, "You have five more minutes to finish your writing."

(3) When thirteen minutes have elapsed, say, "There are two minutes left now, students. Please finish up your writing in two minutes more."

(4) When the full fifteen minutes has elapsed, write the time here: ____________. Then say to students, "Please stop writing now. Be sure that your names are on your papers. Please pass them to the front of the class."

(5) Collect all papers as rapidly as possible. Please see that every student hands in a paper--whether or not that student has completed his writing.

(6) Please place all the papers in the envelope provided you. A representative of the North-

western Curriculum Center in English will pick them up before the end of the school day.

Thank you for your cooperation. We will soon be in touch with you concerning the second assignment.

Part 2

Dear ________________,

We had good luck on the 7th of May! Ultimately, the entire sample of student composition from Niles was either picked up or mailed to us. We now have the first half of our "collecting" job done.

Attached you will find a second "procedure" sheet and enclosed you will find two sets of papers to be distributed to students. We ask that you make this assignment on Monday, May 20th, and have students write for fifteen minutes on May 21st.

The five facts (listed in our last letter) concerning the collection of papers pertain to the present collection as well! Grades six through ten are involved; there are no hidden assessments; etc.

Please do not mark or grade the themes you collect. Please encourage students to write in ink. Have them write only on the paper provided them.

There is one procedural departure from the last sampling: We ask that you place (a) the students' compositions, (b) their notes, and (c) the "procedure" sheets in the stamped envelope provided. Please see that it is mailed no later than May 22nd. We'd like very much to have the compositions in hand by the 23rd so that we can begin classifying and processing them.

Thanks, at this point, may seem superfluous. Nonetheless we are grateful and shall be in touch with you again.

Sincerely,

Stephen Dunning

__Procedure__: On Monday, May 20th, make the "take-home" assignment below.

(READ ALOUD) Tomorrow, in class, you are going to write for fifteen minutes for those Northwestern professors who seem so interested in your compositions. For this composition, however, you should do some thinking and planning at home. When you come to school tomorrow I want you to be ready to describe some room--or a part of a room--in the place where you live. What room or part of a room you decide to write about is important.

(READ ALOUD) You may want to choose a room that will show how you spend your out-of-school time. You may choose the kitchen, for example, and describe the sink where you have to wash the dishes. Or you may describe the room where you do your homework or the place where you watch television. You might choose some part of the house that your father or mother or guardian works in. You may simply want to describe the furnishings in one room that is important to you or to your family.

(READ ALOUD) Now I said that I wanted you to be ready to write when you come to school. I mean that I want you to __plan__ your paper at home, then write it here at school. So tonight you must finally decide upon what you want to describe. You may talk this over with anyone you want to. Ask someone in your home what they think would be a good topic. Ask them why they think so. I also want you to make a list of details tonight, facts that can be used in writing the paper. To help you with this part of the assignment, I'm now going to give you a sheet of paper that you can use for your notes.

__Procedure__: Distribute "Note pages," one to each student.

(READ ALOUD) Notice that there are two spaces on the sheet. In the first space, "FIRST THOUGHTS," I want you to write down the first ideas or facts that you get for this paper. You will have a few minutes here today to think about that room or part of a room that you're going to describe. You may be able to jot down some ideas about that place. In the second space, "AT HOME," you will continue with your note taking after you have finally decided what your exact subject will be. You should take these notes while you're actually looking at specific parts of the room you're describing. It might be better to make two inspections: one right after you've decided for sure upon your subject, a second inspection an hour later or even Tuesday morning, before school.

(READ ALOUD) Make your notes very specific. For example, instead of just saying that a room has a certain number of chairs, a professional writer doing an assignment like this would try to pick out the chair or chairs that would best show what the room is like. He would try to find out what makes any one chair he is looking at different from all other chairs. He would look for individual things, then: color, kind of wood, kind of fabric, the condition of the chair, its size, etc. Don't take too many notes. Probably the "Note page" you have provides plenty of space for notes. Remember you will be writing for only fifteen minutes tomorrow. You'll be using the same size paper that you wrote on two weeks ago.

Procedure: Hold up a blank "writing page" so that all students can see.

(READ ALOUD) The point is, of course, that you jot down important details tonight. To repeat the assignment, tomorrow you are to describe a room or a part of a room in the place where you live. You should choose that place carefully. It's pretty obvious that you should bring your "Note pages" to class tomorrow. You should write from those notes. Are there any questions?

Procedure: (1) Spend four or five minutes discussing questions that arise. Ask students whether they have already chosen the part of the room they are going to write about.

(2) Allow a few minutes for students to jot down some FIRST THOUGHTS. See that each student has started a note or two in the FIRST THOUGHTS section.

(3) On Tuesday, May 21st, set aside a total of twenty minutes for the writing of papers. Follow the procedures below.

(READ ALOUD) I hope that each of you brought to class your "Note page" and that it is filled with interesting details about some part of your home. In just a moment you'll get a chance to write your descriptions. While I'm handing out the writing pages, however, you might close your eyes and decide upon some way to start your writing: How can you arrange your details in the best fashion? How do you want to start your writing? What details--from all those you wrote down--should come first in your description? See if you can get a plan for the writing you will be doing.

Procedure: (1) Distribute writing pages, one to each student.

(2) Check to see that each student has pen or pencil.

(READ ALOUD) You know what the writing job is: You're going to describe a room or a part of a room in your home. You will be writing for fifteen minutes. After ten minutes, I shall remind you that there are but five minutes left. You may want to think a minute or two before actually beginning to write. You may make notes on the back of your writing page if you want to. Please start to work now.

Procedure: (1) Write here the time that students start to work: ________________

(2) When ten minutes have elapsed, say, "You have five minutes more to finish your writing."

(3) When the full fifteen minutes has elapsed, write the time here: ________________. Then say to students, "Please stop writing now. Be sure that your names are on your papers. Please put your name on your 'Note page' too. The teachers from Northwestern would like to see that as well. Will you please pass your notes and your compositions to the front of the class."

(4) Collect all papers as rapidly as possible. Please see that every student hands in a paper--whether or not that student has completed his writing. You should not insist that "Note pages" come in, but it would be interesting to us should we be able to get "Note pages" from each student.

(5) Please place all compositions and these "procedures" pages in the envelope provided. Please see that the envelope is taken to the school office and that someone there is responsible for mailing it.

Thank you for your cooperation. We shall be in touch with you soon.

Part 3

An Investigation of the Grammatical and Structural Characteristics of Student Writing, Grades 7-10
June, 1966

1. Design of the Study

Eight-hundred Niles Township students from the seventh through tenth grades wrote fifteen minute, in-class essays on two occasions for the writing sample. The first essay was an evaluation of summer school; the second was a description of a favorite room in the student's home. Instructions for both samples were standardized and were read to the students by their teachers.

In an effort to obtain a representative sampling from the population, two different procedures were utilized. The first, developed by Robinson and McCall, indicated the size of the sample needed for a given level of acceptable error in the results.[1] The second checked the proportionality within the sample.

More specifically, the entire sampling procedure involved the following steps:

(1) A total listing of all teachers and the size of their classes for grades six through ten in School Districts 67, 73½, 74, 72, 69, 73, and 71 was obtained.

(2) This total number of students was used as the population, and on this basis, the Robinson formula was applied.

(3) Taking the number of students needed for an acceptable error level (.01), a proportional was maintained in each class using these necessary subdivisions and factors:

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[1] Glenn Robinson and Chester H. McCall, Jr. "Small Sample Technique in Education: An Application to Polling Teacher Opinion." Paper presented to the American Educational Research Association, Chicago, Illinois, February 21, 1961.

(a) Grade level.
(b) Homogeneous ability grouping.
(c) Heterogeneous ability grouping.
(d) No grouping by ability.

(4) Using this unit as a base, the number of classes needed to supply a given number of students was computed.

(5) From a table of random numbers, the classes were selected. A four digit number was drawn from the table and the first number was designated as the grade level; the second, grouping within grade; and the third and fourth, teacher numbers. Unpaired essays and heterogeneous classes were eliminated from the sample. The final distribution of students is shown in Table I.

Frequency counts were made of a number of grammatical and structural characteristics of these papers. Eleven variables, which fall into five major groups, were examined:

1. Usage: An investigation of deviations from commonly accepted "correct" usage.

2. Pronouns: The use of 1st, 2nd, or 3rd person pronouns.

3. Single-word modifiers: The use of descriptive and qualifying adjectives and adverbs and the use of "descriptive" adverbs.

4. Phrasal elements: The use of noun verbal, verbal modifier, and prepositional phrases.

5. Subordinate clauses.

Categories for the counts were carefully defined to be mutually exclusive. Reader reliability was examined with a random sample of 100 papers which were scored by two readers. The reliabilities were generally above .80, and in several cases, were above .90. The same two readers made counts on the entire 1122 papers in the sample, each reader grading roughly half of the categories for each paper. The categories are defined and reader reliabilities discussed in the appropriate sections of this report.

The study is an exploratory or descriptive one. No hypotheses were established and tested. Rather, it attempts to find answers to three questions:

1. What are the general growth patterns in student writing?

2. How stable are students' writing habits in different writing situations?

TABLE I

Distribution of Sample*

	Grade				
Ability	7th	8th	9th	10th	
High	20	40	38	32	130
Middle	23	44	170	137	374
Low	21	--	23	13	57
	64	84	231	182	561

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*Each student wrote two Essays for the sample.

3. Is there any clear-cut relation between students' measurable linguistic habits and their grade level; i.e., do the writing characteristics have any predictive value as an indication of grade level?

The data were divided into the two modes of discourse and submitted to analysis of variance, first with division into grade levels and second, with division into ability groupings within grade levels. Correlations between student performances on the two modes of discourse were correlated to investigate the stability of student writing for different writing tasks. Finally regression analysis, using grade as dependent variable, was performed to give an indication of the predictive value of the categories.

2. Errors in Usage

Initially seven usage errors were counted, but as a result of the reader reliability study it was discovered that one of these categories, "word mechanics," was dominant and that several of the categories had such low error rates that precise measurement was meaningless. In addition, several of these low scoring categories (with error rates $<.10/100$ words) had unsatisfactory inter-judge reliability scores of $<.7000$. These seven categories were therefore collapsed into a single error count. The seven categories, along with their respective reader reliability scores, are described below.

Variable I: Errors in Usage

Word Mechanics. Any single word (or in the case of incorrect hyphenation, two or more words) which is misspelled, incorrectly capitalized, or contains a misuse of a hyphen or an apostrophe will be counted.

a. The reference for standard spellings is *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*. Confusion of *there*, *their*, and *they're*, and *your* and *you're* is counted in this category.

b. The reference for failure to capitalize words which are normally capitalized, or unnecessary capitalization of words which are normally in the lower case is Wykoff and Shaw, *The Harper Handbook*, pp. 698-704.

c. The reference for failure to use an apostrophe where appropriate, and unnecessary use of the apostrophe is *The Harper Handbook*, pp. 680-684.

d. The references for determining whether certain word combinations are written as two words, as one word written solid, or as a compound word with a hyphen between parts are Webster's Third and The Harper Handbook, pp. 685-689.

Procedure: A word incorrectly used is counted as one error, even though it may contain several errors, and may be used incorrectly several times throughout the paper. Reliability .9344.

Commas in Series. Any failure to use a comma (or semi-colon) to separate words, phrases, or short clauses in a series, and any inclusion of unnecessary commas (or semi-colons) within a series will be counted.

a. Commas are mandatory between:
  1) Words in a series. (a lovely, ancient, green couch)
  2) Phrases in a series. (in the living room, in the garden, or on the patio)
  3) Short main clauses of no more than four words. (I came, I saw, I conquered.) For treatment of longer clause series see category 7.

b. Commas are optional (and thus excluded from the error count):
  1) Between words, phrases, and short clauses joined in series by and or or. (Swift or Dryden or Pope)
  2) Before the final adjective of a series. (a pretty, charming, talented young woman)
  3) Between non-coordinate adjectives.(a heavy steel cable)

Procedure: Count only one error for each incorrect series. Reliability .4674.

Commas as Interrupters. Failure to use a comma or a comma pair with interrupting words or phrases, or inclusion of unnecessary commas will be counted.

a. Commas are mandatory in setting off:
  1) Appositives with their modifiers. (Mr. Smith, our new president, . . .)
  2) Words used in direct address. (Mr. Brown, are you there?)
  3) Parenthetical expressions. (Consider, however, . . .; We must, on the other hand, . . .)
  4) Dates and addresses.
  5) Introductory modifying phrases containing verb forms. (Half-concealed in the bushes, the dog . . .; In order to play a vigorous game, you should be . . .)

6) Introductory adverbial clauses. (Since I have turned seventeen, I . . .)
7) Contrasting, coordinate words, phrases, or clauses. (His misspelling is due, not to ignorance, but to . . .)
8) Coordinate conjunctions joining independent clauses. (I went to the movies, and then returned home.) This section treats the so-called "comma splice." See section 7 for treatment of clauses run together without the use of either a semicolon or coordinate conjunction.

b. Commas are optional in setting off:
   1) Adjective clauses.
   2) Non-introductory adverbial clauses.
   3) Introductory prepositional phrases. (In the summer I like to go swimming.)

Procedure: Count one error for each incorrectly omitted or added comma or comma pair. Reliability .7729.

Verb Form. Errors in subject-predicate agreement, tense sequence, and inflectional form will be counted.

a. A verb must agree with its subject in number.
   1) When a compound subject joined by "either . . . or" or "neither . . . nor" contains one singular and one plural simple subject, the verb agrees with the nearer subject. (Neither Tom nor his brothers are at home.)
   2) Compound subjects joined by and require a plural verb. (Tom and I went to the movies.) Singular simple subjects joined by "either . . . or," "not only . . . but also," etc. take a singular verb.
   3) One, each, each one, neither, everyone, another, etc. are singular subjects and take a singular verb.
   4) A verb agrees with its subject, not with a predicate complement. (The hindrance is many unwilling individuals.)

Procedure: Count one error for each failure of subject-predicate agreement.

b. In narrative passages, use of tense must be consistent, and not shift in an essay or sentence.

Procedure: Count one error for each shift away from the "basic" tense established at the beginning of the narrative passage. Do not count returns to the base tense.

Example: "We went camping last summer. Then we come home so we won't miss school. We hated coming back." Tense shifts from past to present, and then returns to past. Count one error.

c. In complex sentences, verbs must follow correct tense sequence.

1) If the tense of the verb in the main clause is present, future, future perfect, or present perfect, any tense which expresses the thought and correct time relationship may be used in the subordinate clause.
2) If the tense of the main verb is past or past perfect, the verb of the subordinate clause must also be past or past perfect.

Procedure: Most of the tense sequence errors in the Niles papers involve the use of the modal auxiliaries, should, would, may, might, etc. An excellent list of acceptable sequence is in The Harper Handbook, pp. 557-560. Count one error per incorrect sequence. Each sequence may contain several verbs in the wrong tense. Example: "When you visit my house, you would see my turquoise couch. You would see my matching rug. You would see my matching mother." Count one error.

d. The reference for correct inflectional changes in the form and uses of a verb to show tense, mood, and voice is The Harper Handbook, pp. 552-594. Count one error for each improperly inflected form, no matter how many times the error may be repeated throughout the paper. Reliability .5425.

Pronoun Form. Errors in pronoun-antecedent agreement and pronoun case will be counted.

a. A pronoun must agree with its antecedent in number.

1) The indefinite antecedents another, anybody, anyone, each, each one, either, everybody, everyone, neither, nobody, somebody, etc. are referred to by singular pronouns. (Everybody did his homework.)
2) Antecedents joined by and are referred to by a plural pronoun. (Bill and Andrew have completed their work.)
3) Antecedents joined by "either . . . or," "neither . . . nor," etc. are referred to by a singular pronoun. (Neither Bill nor Mark has done his homework.)
4) Collective antecedents will be regarded as singular or plural. Either singular or plural pronouns will be considered correct.

b. The case of a pronoun is determined by its grammatical function in the sentence.

Procedure: Count one error for each failure of pronoun-antecedent agreement and for each pronoun in the wrong case. Reliability .8728.

Sentence Fragments.

a. A subordinate clause cannot stand alone as if it were a complete sentence. (Man has been at war. Since the beginning of time.)

b. A phrase cannot stand alone as if it were a complete sentence. (His ambition was to graduate at the top of his class. And win a Rhodes scholarship.)

c. A substantive followed by a phrase or subordinate clause cannot stand alone as if it were a complete sentence. (The boy with the plaid shirt, eagerly watching the ball game progress.)

Procedure: Count one error per sentence fragment. Reliability .9645.

Run-on Sentences. Run-on sentences include all sentences of two or more main clauses in which the connection between the main clauses is not indicated by either a semicolon or a coordinate conjunction. Exception: sentences containing main clauses of no more than four words are treated in section 2. Failure to place a comma before the coordinate conjunction connecting two main clauses is treated in section 3. Thus:

"I came, I saw, I conquered."	No error.
"I came I saw I conquered."	Comma series error.
"I went to the movies but I didn't enjoy myself."	Comma interrupter error.
"I went to the movies; I didn't enjoy myself."	No error
"I went to the movies I didn't enjoy myself."	Run-on sentence.
"I went to the movies, I didn't enjoy myself."	Run-on sentence.

Reliability .9638.

The distribution of errors by grade level, without regard to ability grouping, and the correlation between student performances on the two modes are shown in Table II.

TABLE II

Variable I: Errors / 100 Words

	Distribution by Grades				
	7th	8th	9th	10th	F
Evaluative Themes	3.99	3.66	3.08	2.57	6.85^{**}
Descriptive Themes	4.21	4.16	3.40	3.09	4.02^{**}
Correlation: Evaluation x Description	.4623	.5392	.5952	.6240	----

**Significant, $P < .01$

For both evaluative and descriptive essays, the error rate drops approximately 1.2 errors/100 words over the four year span, although, interestingly enough, students consistently tended to make more errors in the descriptive than in the evaluative papers. The correlations between performances on both modes of discourse show that the error rate becomes more stable across the four grades, the correlations steadily increasing from .46 to .62 in the tenth grade. As will be seen elsewhere in this report, the across-mode correlations for the error variable are the highest of the eleven variables; that is, the most stable characteristic of student writing across the two modes of discourse appears to be the error rate.

In Table III, the error rates are broken down by ability levels as well as grades. When the sample is broken down thus, trends are not quite as clear, perhaps because of the variations in cell size. The middle ability cells, for example, range from 23 to 170, the low from 13 to 23, and the high from 20 to 40. Variance in the smaller cells is high enough to introduce a considerable standard error of means.

Nevertheless, some trends are clear. The low ability students make more usage errors than the middle ability students, who, in turn, make more than their high ability colleagues. This trend holds true for both evaluative and descriptive themes, with the students having generally higher error rates on the descriptive themes. Both high and middle ability students tend to lower their error rates across the four year span; the low ability students oppose this trend, the error rate increasing 1.5 errors/100 words across the four grade levels.

3. Pronoun Usage

Three counts, of first, second, and third person personal pronouns, were made:

Variable II

First Person Singular Pronouns. Count all first person singular pronouns, including I, me, my, mine, myself, etc. (Note: First person plural pronouns were used so infrequently in the essays that they did not seem to merit the effort of counting except in the case noted below for second person pronouns.) Reliability .9676.

Variable III

Second Person Pronouns. Count you, yourself, your, etc. Count all first person plural pronouns when used in the sense "you, the reader, and I." Reliability .9827.

TABLE III

Variable I: Errors / 100 Words

Distribution by Grades and Ability Groups

Evaluative Themes

Grade

Ability		7	8	9	10	Correlation: Grade x Error
	High	2.45	3.89	1.64	.91	-.314
	Middle	4.70	3.45	3.19	2.86	-.119
	Low	4.68	----	5.42	6.06	+.111

Descriptive Themes

Grade

Ability		7	8	9	10	Correlation: Grade x Error
	High	3.03	4.14	1.92	.96	-.343
	Middle	4.51	4.12	3.24	3.45	-.031
	Low	5.00	----	7.27	6.65	+.116

Correlation of Student Performances: Evaluation x Description

Grade

Ability		7	8	9	10
	High	.6133	.6520	.3741	.3178
	Middle	.7031	.3907	.5679	.5636
	Low	-.0224	-----	.3095	.3620

Variable IV

Third Person Personal Pronouns. Count all third person personal pronouns, including he, she, his, himself, herself, etc. Reliability .9314.

Rates are reported as a ratio: Pronouns / 100 words.

While no count was made to verify the impression, the theme graders generally noted that second person pronouns referred not to a specific person to whom the composition was addressed, but to a general, abstract audience; Variable III thus seemed to be a measure of the so-called "impersonal" use of the second person pronoun.

Similarly, third person pronouns almost invariably referred to an abstract or hypothetical person; i.e., somebody, anybody, a student, a teacher, a parent, etc., rather than to specific individuals; i.e., my friend John; my teacher, Miss Bronson; my mother, etc.

Variables III and IV are thus an interesting measure of how a student presents his generalizations; of whether he presents them as applying directly to his audience, or whether he presents them in abstract, general terms. It was felt that the use of third person pronouns could prove to be a significant index of maturity, since contemporary prose conventions call for the writer to speak in general terms about "a person," "someone," or "one," rather than directing his remarks directly to the audience.

In the evaluative essays, there is a slight, but significant, decrease in the use of first person pronouns, from 2.92 to 2.43. Second person pronouns usage decreases sharply across the four grade levels, from 2.35 to .77, while third person pronouns increase somewhat from 2.04 to 2.75. Thus there is a rather clear-cut shift away from the use of second person pronouns toward the use of third.

The descriptive themes follow a somewhat different pattern. The use of first person pronouns is considerably higher in the descriptive themes than in the evaluative, largely, one suspects, because of the personal nature of the descriptive essay topic, "A Favorite Room in My House." Large numbers of first person pronouns were introduced, not so much because the theme was descriptive, but because the personal property of the writer was involved. Interestingly enough, however, the use of first person pronouns decreases across the four grades, from 5.24 to 4.74.

Second and third person pronouns are used only rarely in the descriptive essays, at a rate below 1.0 / 100 words. This is, of course, understandable in view of the fact that in a description essay, the student is concentrating on describing things accurately rather than trying to actively persuade an audience to accept his beliefs or arguments. The data are summarized in Table IV.

When the data are divided according to the ability group as well as grade level, the high and middle ability groups follow similar patterns, differing only in degree, while the low ability students show considerably different growth patterns.

In the evaluative themes, both the high and middle groups show a decrease in the use of first person pronouns, with the rates for the middle ability groups running higher (4.59 to 2.74) than those for the high group (2.37 to 1.27). The high ability group shows a decrease in the use of second person pronouns from 1.37 to .05; the rates for the middle group are consistently higher but show a similar decrease from 2.51 to .83. Both groups show an increase in the use of third person pronouns, the high group from 2.14 to 2.94, the middle group from 1.82 to 2.64.

In contrast, the low ability groups show an increase in the use of first person pronouns, from 1.63 to 2.94. The second person pronoun usage decreases from 3.09 to 1.29 although the rates are considerably higher than those of the high and middle groups. Third person pronoun usage increases slightly across grade level for the low ability group, from 2.21 to 2.36.

In the descriptive essays, the use of first person pronouns shows a significant decrease for both high and middle ability groups, 4.70 to 4.16, and 6.70 to 4.95. Again the rates for the middle ability group are higher than those for the high group. First person pronoun use, in contrast, increases for the low ability group from 4.17 to 5.38. Interestingly enough, in 7th grade the low ability students use fewer first person pronouns than either the high or middle ability students.

The use of second person pronouns in the descriptive themes is quite low for all three ability groups. The high ability students show a decrease from 1.06 to .08 pronouns per 100 words. The middle ability students fluctuate widely, with the rates generally under 1.0. The low ability rates are all below .54.

None of the groups uses significant numbers of third person pronouns in the descriptive themes.

Pronoun usage does not seem to be especially consistent. Correlations between student performances on evaluative and descriptive themes range from -.210 to +.6205, but are generally in the neighborhood of ±.1 and show little consistency. The data are summarized in Table V.

TABLE IV

Variables II, III, & IV:

First, Second and Third Person Pronouns / 100 Words

Distribution by Grades

		Grade				
		7	8	9	10	F
Evaluation	1st	2.92	3.24	2.38	2.43	3.15*
	2nd	2.35	2.20	1.29	.77	12.94**
	3rd	2.04	2.36	2.73	2.75	4.45**
Description	1st	5.24	5.32	4.78	4.74	3.60*
	2nd	.76	.95	.72	.45	3.69*
	3rd	.05	.12	.16	.21	1.23

*Significant, P<.05
**Significant, P<.01

Correlation: Evaluation x Description

	Grade			
	7	8	9	10
1st	.1386	-.0416	.1316	.1089
2nd	.1743	.0292	.1053	.3047
3rd	.1593	-.1659	-.1114	-.0028

TABLE V

Variables II, III, & IV:

First, Second, and Third Person Pronouns / 100 Words

Distribution by Grades and Ability Groups

Evaluative Themes

		Grade 7	8	9	10	Correlation: Grade x Pronoun Rate
High Ability	1st	2.37	4.05	1.31	1.27	-.170
	2nd	1.37	1.91	.52	.05	-.023
	3rd	2.14	2.31	2.87	2.94	.220
Middle Ability	1st	4.59	2.50	2.47	2.74	-.023
	2nd	2.51	2.45	1.12	.83	-.152
	3rd	1.82	2.40	2.53	2.64	.021
Low Ability	1st	1.63	2.00	3.76	2.94	.111
	2nd	3.09	2.00	1.78	1.29	-.068
	3rd	2.21	2.85	2.46	2.36	.119

Descriptive Themes

		Grade 7	8	9	10	Correlation: Grade x Pronoun Rate
High Ability	1st	4.70	4.96	3.28	4.16	-.017
	2nd	1.06	1.10	.40	.08	-.196
	3rd	.18	.16	.09	.22	.010
Middle Ability	1st	6.70	5.65	4.35	4.95	-.210
	2nd	.71	.82	1.11	.56	-.016
	3rd	.00	.09	.23	.17	.039
Low Ability	1st	4.17	----	7.17	5.38	.116
	2nd	.54	----	.05	.19	-.026
	3rd	.00	----	.00	.00	.008

Correlation of Student Performances:

Evaluation x Description

		Grade 7	8	9	10
High Ability	1st	.1938	.0081	.0737	.1191
	2nd	.6205	-.0545	-.0784	-.0569
	3rd	.3164	-.2330	.2302	.0389
Middle Ability	1st	-.0489	-.0561	.0729	.0986
	2nd	.0912	.1603	.1229	.2929
	3rd	.0000	-.0636	-.1454	-.0199
Low Ability	1st	.0576	------	.1202	-.0038
	2nd	.1496	------	.0549	.3761
	3rd	.0000	------	-.2009	.0000

4. Single-Word Modifiers

The use of three kinds of single word modifiers, descriptive adjectives, qualifiers, and "descriptive" adverbs, were investigated:

Variable V

Descriptive adjectives. Count descriptive adjectives, those which generally describe size, color, and quality, including:

a. Inflected comparatives and superlatives. (A better mouse-trap, the best newspaper)

b. Predicate adjectives. Count adjectives following forms of the verb "to be" and adjectives following verbs which can function as linking verbs, such as seem, grow, become, look, smell, sound. (Grandfather seems older. The city smells bad.)

Exclude:

a. Adjective-nouns which form a compound. (ping-pong table, coffee table, bar stool, breakfast nook)

b. Demonstrative adjectives. (this, that)

c. Numerical adjectives. (one, two, twin, double)

d. Possessive adjectives. (the dog's bowl)

e. Proper adjectives. (the American flag)

f. Articles. (a, an, the)

Procedure: Count every descriptive adjective, even though some adjectives may be used more than once in a paper. Reliability .6702.

Variable VI

Qualifiers. Count:

a. Demonstrative adjectives, same, such, such a, each, every, all, etc. Exclude this, that, these, those, etc.

b. Indefinite adjectives, all, any, some, many, another, much, more, little, a little, less, few, a few, enough, several, etc. Count more and most when used to form comparatives and superlatives of descriptive adjectives.

c. Adverbs of degree, very, nearly, much, too.

Do not count transitional adverbs, also, however, thus, etc. Reliability .7798.

Variable VII

Descriptive adverbs. Count adverbs which tell "how" - how rapidly, how well, how badly, etc., rapidly, quickly, well, efficiently, etc.

Do not count adverbs of direction (up, down, across, etc.) and adjectives of time (sooner, later, immediately, etc.) Reliability .7735.

The reader reliabilities for these three categories, ranging from .6702 to .7798, are not particularly satisfactory, and this inter-judge variance is reflected in rather ambiguous results from the investigation. Several problems were encountered in the categories. There was some confusion over whether noun adjuncts, i.e., stone wall, pool table, bar stool, should be treated as nouns or adjectives. Adjectives describing color presented problems when placed in a noun position, as in "It was a lovely red." Inflected comparatives and superlatives were not clearly defined as being either in the adjective or qualifier category. As is evident from the category descriptions, traditional definitions of parts of speech were used. More satisfactory results would probably have been obtained if form classes and substitution frames had been used to define the elements being counted.

Nevertheless, some patterns of growth were apparent in spite of the low reader reliabilities. As is to be expected, students used considerably more descriptive adjectives in the descriptive themes than in the evaluative essays, with a mean of 9.12 for the descriptive themes versus a mean of 4.98 for the evaluations. The use of descriptive adjectives increases across the four grades for the evaluative themes from 4.49 to 5.60. There is no significant difference across grade levels for the descriptive themes.

No significant changes occur in the use of qualifiers across the four grade levels. The evaluations contain a mean of 3.72 qualifiers/100 words, the descriptions, 2.72 qualifiers/100 words.

The use of adverbs increases significantly for both evaluative and descriptive essays, from .43 to .82 in the descriptive and from .72 to 1.03 in the evaluations.

The correlations between student performances on opinion and description themes are, like those for the pronoun categories, quite low, ranging, apparently at random, from -.0863 to +.3002. These trends are summarized in Table VI.

When the counts for the evaluative essays are broken down by ability grouping as well as by grade, both high and middle ability groups show similar increases in the use of descriptive adjectives, from 4.88 to 5.81 and from 4.37 to 5.71. The low ability students seem to decrease in the use of adjectives, the 7th grade rate being 4.26 and the 10th, 3.46, but missing data make this conclusion at best tenuous.

In the descriptive essays, the high ability rates fluctuate widely with a range of 7.98 to 11.86, but with 7th and 10th grade rates of 9.25 and 9.33. The middle ability rates are in general slightly lower, ranging from 8.47 to 9.26, but indicate no significant pattern. Missing data and variation of means make the low ability scores uninterpretable.

The data for qualifiers and adverbs for both evaluative and descriptive themes do not present any clear-cut patterns. It is generally apparent that high ability students use slightly more descriptive adjectives than do middle ability students, and that, for evaluative essays, this number increases across the four year span. Clearly, students use more descriptive adjectives than they do qualifiers, and they use more qualifiers than "descriptive" adverbs. Beyond these, however, no generalizations seem possible. These data are summarized in Table VII.

5. Verbals and Prepositional Phrases

Three kinds of phrasal elements were counted:

Variable VIII

Noun Verbal Phrases. Verbal phrases are defined as groups of related words containing a verbal (i.e., either a participal, a gerund, or infinitive.) A noun verbal phrase fills a sentence slot normally occupied by a noun. It may function as either a subject or an object (direct, indirect, or of a preposition) in a sentence. Reliability .8078.

Variable IX

Verbal Modifier Phrases. Count all verbal phrases which function either as adjectives or adverbs in the sentence. Reliability .8441.

TABLE VI

Variables V, VI, & VII: Descriptive Adjectives, Qualifiers, and Adverbs / 100 Words

Distribution by Grades

		Grade				
		7	8	9	10	F
Evaluation	V	4.49	4.36	5.49	5.60	8.36**
	VI	3.81	3.93	3.71	3.43	1.68
	VII	.72	1.19	.94	1.03	2.92*
Description	V	9.36	8.65	9.56	9.07	1.05
	VI	2.84	2.68	2.70	2.69	.15
	VII	.43	.81	.68	.82	3.53*

*Significant, P<.05
**Significant, P<.01

Correlation: Evaluation x Description

		Grade			
		7	8	9	10
Variable	V	.0385	.0478	-.0528	-.0749
	VI	.3875	.1171	-.0413	-.0863
	VII	.0058	.3002	.2615	.2537

TABLE VII

Variables V, VI, & VII: Descriptive Adjectives, Qualifiers, and Adverbs / 100 Words

Evaluative Themes

		Grade				
		7	8	9	10	Correlation: Grade x Rate
High Ability	V	4.88	4.09	7.12	5.81	.126
	VI	3.67	4.05	3.36	2.81	-.225
	VII	.75	1.10	1.86	1.73	.075
Middle Ability	V	4.37	4.60	5.56	5.71	.124
	VI	3.18	3.82	3.99	3.54	.071
	VII	.84	1.35	.78	.76	.019
Low Ability	V	4.26	----	4.28	3.46	-.173
	VI	4.64	----	3.00	3.62	-.053
	VII	.57	----	.71	1.55	.296

Descriptive Themes

		Grade 7	8	9	10	Correlation: Grade x Rate
High Ability	V	9.25	7.98	11.86	9.33	.086
	VI	3.16	2.84	2.28	2.17	-.106
	VII	.36	.61	1.31	1.34	.045
Middle Ability	V	8.47	9.26	9.23	2.05	.044
	VI	2.37	2.54	2.94	2.86	.043
	VII	.49	.99	.56	.72	-.045
Low Ability	V	10.44	----	6.65	9.45	-.181
	VI	3.03	----	2.66	1.87	-.194
	VII	.43	----	.42	.71	.139

Correlation of Student Performances: Evaluation x Description

		Grade 7	8	9	10
High Ability	V	.4341	.2592	.0903	.1501
	VI	.4437	.0995	.1515	-.2736
	VII	-.0290	.1134	.3456	.3857
Middle Ability	V	-.1422	-.2191	-.0669	.0512
	VI	.2525	.1256	-.0382	-.0938
	VII	.0927	.3863	.0626	.0074
Low Ability	V	-.0818	----	-.0181	.2713
	VI	.4155	----	-.2398	-.1368
	VII	-.1508	----	-.1024	.3946

Variable X

Prepositional Phrases. Count all phrases introduced by the standard list of prepositions: "at," "in," "on," "by," "around," etc. Reliability .9420.

The scores are reported as a ratio of phrases per ten clauses in the text.

The most interesting result of the analysis is the indication that students rely very heavily on prepositional phrases in their writing, and use very few verbal phrases in their writing. Means for prepositional phrases ranged from 6.52 to 11.69; those for noun verbal phrases from .16 to 2.33. This seems particularly interesting in view of the results of the investigation of single-word modifiers, where students clearly make little use of adverbs and qualifying adverbial and adjectival elements. Student writing does not contain much expansion of verbal phrases; nouns, adjectives, and prepositional phrases appear to do the bulk of the work of communication.

When the sample is broken down by grade level only, increases for all three variables across all grade levels and for both modes of discourse are seen. In the evaluative themes the use of noun verbal phrases increases from .87 to 1.22, although the increase is not statistically significant. Students use fewer noun verbal phrases in the descriptive paper, but the use increases significantly from .16 / 10 clauses in 7th grade to .43 in 10th. Students also use fewer verbal modifier phrases in evaluative writing than they do in descriptive, the increase for the former being 1.71 to 2.33, and for the latter, 1.10 to 1.67. Prepositional phrase usage was considerably higher in the descriptive essays than in the evaluative. In the descriptive themes, prepositional phrase use increased from 9.57 to 11.69 in grade ten; in the evaluative themes, it increased from 6.52 to 8.24. These trends are summarized in Table VIII.

When the sample is divided by grade level and ability grouping as well, the results again prove to be somewhat inconclusive. In the evaluative themes, high ability students appear to use more noun verbal phrases (mean 1.53) than do the middle group (mean 1.18) and low group (mean.99), but the means for specific grade levels vary widely and sporadically. Results for Variable IX, verbal modifier phrases, are similarly inconclusive, with all three groups varying between about 1.4 and 2.9. High ability students do appear to use more prepositional phrases, increasing from 6.41 to 8.62, than middle ability students, increasing from 6.10 to 8.32, who in turn use more than the low ability students, who appear to decrease usage across grade level (7.09 to 6.67).

TABLE VIII

Variables VIII, IX, X:

Nominal Verbal Phrases, Verbal Modifier Phrases, and Prepositional Phrases / 10 Clauses

Distribution by Grades

		Grade 7	8	9	10	F
Evaluative Themes	VIII	.87	1.28	1.32	1.22	.95
	IX	1.71	1.97	2.35	2.33	2.16*
	X	6.52	6.99	7.44	8.24	7.42**
Descriptive Themes	VIII	.16	.21	.27	.43	6.80**
	IX	1.10	.99	1.49	1.67	6.66**
	X	9.57	9.62	10.96	11.69	5.45**

*Significant, $P < .01$
**Significant, $P < .05$

Correlations: Evaluation x Description

		Grade 7	8	9	10
Variable	VIII	-.0140	-.0158	.0774	.0103
	IX	-.1445	.1081	.0920	-.0960
	X	.2595	.2805	.2650	.1423

The patterns are similar for descriptive themes. All three groups use fewer verbal and more prepositional phrases in descriptive themes than they do in the evaluative. All three groups, however, appear to be increasing use of all three kinds of phrases. Again high ability students use more prepositional phrases (mean 11.38) than middle (mean 10.08) than the low (mean 11.38). The data are summarized in Table IX.

6. Subordinate Clauses

The subordination index, the ratio of subordinate to total number of clauses, has been a popular measure of writing maturity since it was first used by LaBrant.[2] For this study, the subordination index was determined as follows:

Variable XI

Subordinate Clauses. A subordinate clause is defined as a clause (a group of words containing a subject and predicate) which is not capable of standing alone as a complete sentence. Count all subordinate clauses, including those which function as nouns, adjectives, and adverbs.

Reported in terms of subordinate clauses per ten clauses of text.

The subordination index did not appear to be a particularly stable variable. Correlation between scores on descriptive and evaluative themes was generally low and varied from -.2003 to +.1120. In the evaluative essays, the subordination index had a mean of 4.74 and a range of 4.54 to 4.96. Change across grade level was not significant.

In the descriptive themes, the index increased from 2.13 in grade 7 to 2.92 in grade 10, the change was significant. That students do not use as many subordinate clauses in descriptive themes as they do in evaluative themes suggests that the subordination index is perhaps not an especially effective index of maturity, simply because the number of subordinate clauses used would appear, in part, to be a reflection of the kind of writing task as well as of the student's linguistic maturity. The data for the grade by grade analysis are summarized in Table X.

When the sample is divided by ability grouping as well as by grade level, the results are not any more significant. In the

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[2] Lou LaBrant, "A Study of Certain Language Developments in Children," Genetic Psychology Monographs, XIV (November, 1933), pp. 387-491.

TABLE IX

Variables VIII, IX, X:

Nominal Verbal Phrases, Adjectival Verbal Phrases, Prepositional Phrases

Distribution by Grades and Groups

Evaluative Themes

		Grade				Correlation: Grade x Rate
		7	8	9	10	
High Ability	VIII	.74	1.65	2.37	1.39	.047
	IX	1.81	1.88	3.56	2.93	.017
	X	6.41	6.84	9.23	8.62	.082
Middle Ability	VIII	.92	1.39	1.15	1.26	.024
	IX	1.41	2.06	2.25	2.16	.024
	X	6.10	7.13	7.97	8.32	.139
Low Ability	VIII	.94	----	1.04	1.01	.005
	IX	1.93	----	2.24	3.01	.201
	X	7.09	----	6.39	6.67	-.016

Reportorial Themes

		Grade				Correlation: Grade x Rate
		7	8	9	10	
High Ability	VIII	.25	.14	.32	.45	.177
	IX	.97	.95	1.73	1.99	.176
	X	9.44	10.49	13.52	12.07	.213
Middle Ability	VIII	.14	.28	.32	.45	.025
	IX	1.24	1.02	1.40	1.58	.088
	X	9.57	8.82	10.62	11.26	.141
Low Ability	VIII	.09	----	.06	.52	.056
	IX	1.05	----	1.00	.94	-.034
	X	9.69	----	9.16	10.66	.113

Correlations: Evaluative x Descriptive

		Grade			
		7	8	9	10
High Ability	VIII	-.056	-.3367	.0395	.0102
	IX	-.2304	.0629	.0885	-.0962
	X	.0822	.3005	.0174	-.1017
Middle Ability	VIII	.2747	.0869	.1923	.0497
	IX	-.2309	.1338	.0943	-.0831
	X	.0616	.3054	.2426	.1475
Low Ability	VIII	-.4058	----	.1583	-.3972
	IX	-.0506	----	.1211	-.3375
	X	.4450	----	.4052	.3524

TABLE X

Variable XI: Subordinate Clauses

Distribution by Grades

	7	8	9	10	F
Evaluative	4.70	4.96	4.78	4.54	.57
Descriptive	2.13	2.55	2.70	2.92	5.22*
Correlation: Evaluative x Descriptive	.0429	-.2003	.0835	.1120	---

*Significant, $P \leq 05$

TABLE XI

Variable XI: Subordinate Clauses

Distribution by Grades and Ability Groups

	7	8	9	10	Correlation: Grade x Sub. Clause
High	4.34	4.96	4.78	4.31	.090
Middle	4.92	4.96	4.40	4.59	.015
Low	4.86	---	4.90	4.58	.089
High	2.79	2.22	2.83	2.86	.081
Middle	1.71	2.84	2.82	3.01	.104
Low	1.96	---	2.19	2.08	.018

Correlation of Student Performances: Evaluation x Description

Grade

	7	8	9	10
High	.0932	-.2899	.1370	.3145
Middle	.1113	-.1642	.1210	.0682
Low	.1490	----	.1496	.1932

evaluative themes there seems to be little difference among the three ability groups, all of which have means in the range 4.31 to 4.96 in all grade levels. No growth patterns, either positive or negative, appear.

In the descriptive themes the high and middle ability groups follow different patterns from the low. The high group shows considerable fluctuation around a mean of 2.67. The middle group steadily increases in the use of subordinate clauses from 1.71 in grade 7 to 3.01 in grade 10. The low ability rate is about 1.0 subordinate clause per ten classes lower, with a mean of 2.07. Again correlations between student performances of the two modes are not high, varying widely with a range of -.2988 to +.3145.

7. Regression Analysis: The Predictive Value of the Variables

One of the purposes of the study was to determine the usefulness of the variables in predicting grade level, or, phrased inversely, to see whether growth patterns located by the study were clear enough that specific usage frequencies can be more or less closely associated with specific grade levels. In the past, studies like those of LaBrant and Hunt[3] have located multiple regression factors in the area of .6 and .7. But it is important to note that such studies have included a wide span of grade levels and have sampled student writing behavior at three or four year intervals. Such high regression scores are possible because of the breadth of the sample (student writing changes radically over, say a ten year span) and because of the fact that interval samples are not likely to overlap to a great degree.

In this study, however, the grade levels examined are contiguous. The variance is great enough within each grade level that variances from one cell overlap those of adjacent ones, making regression scores lower.

Regression analysis was performed on the sample in two ways. First, the essays were divided simply according to mode of discourse without distinction among ability groups. With grade as a dependent variable, the regression scores were quite low, .2234 for the evaluative themes, and .2629 for the descriptive themes.

The analysis was also run with the sample divided by ability as well as by modes of discourse, again with grade as the dependent variable. For the high ability students the multiple r's were somewhat higher than those for the sample as a whole, with values of .4472 for the evaluative themes and .4564 for the descriptive themes. Interestingly enough, the most significant variable in both cases was Errors in Usage.

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[3] Kellogg Hunt, Grammatical Structures Written at Three Grade Levels, Champaign, 1965.

The middle ability regression scores were quite low, and due to the predominance of middle ability students in the entire population, this explains why the multiple r's for the entire population was so low. The values were .2492 and .2696 for the evaluative and descriptive essays.

The most successful analysis of the lot achieved a multiple r of .6360 for the low ability student's descriptive essays. For the evaluative themes, the multiple r was a fairly high .4697. Interestingly enough, only one variable was significant in each case, Adverbs for the evaluative essays, and Noun Verbal Phrases for the descriptive themes.

No really dependable, consistent predictor variables resulted from the analysis. In general, variables appeared in what seemed to be an almost random pattern, as for example, in the case of the low ability students, where two different variables were good predictors for the two different modes. Several variables, however, appeared in the regression equations more than one time, and would thus appear to have more significant predictive power than others. The Errors variable entered at a significant level three times; Second Person Pronouns, four times; Noun Verbal Phrases, three times, and Prepositional Phrases, four. The data for the regression analysis are summarized in Table XII.

8. General Conclusions

The results of the study are, on the whole, quite nebulous. The findings are frequently ambiguous and therefore not subject to a single, conclusive generalization.

In this case three interpretations seem possible:

1. Student writing behavior is wildly erratic, exhibiting no predictable growth patterns and varying widely from one case to another.

2. The sample essays themselves were collected in such a manner that the students' writing was abnormal.

3. The sampling prodedure introduced variance into the results.

It may be that all three of these reasons account for the ambiguity of results in the study. First, although the sample was designed

TABLE XII

Regression Analysis

Evaluative Themes

Significant Variables	Correlation	Standard Error
2nd Person Pronoun	.2832	.074
Prepositional Phrases	-.1283	.057
Errors	.1283	.068

Multiple R = .2234

Descriptive Themes

Significant Variables	Correlation	Standard Error
Noun Verbal Phrases	-1.2501	.32
2nd Person Pronouns	.4062	.13
Prepositional Phrases	-.0767	.03
Subordinate Clauses	-.312	.11

Multiple R = .2629

High Ability Students

Evaluative Themes

Significant Variables	Correlation	Standard Error
Errors	.5118	.13
Qualifiers	.3723	.19

Multiple R = .4472

Descriptive Themes

Significant Variables	Correlation	Standard Error
Errors	.5308	.12
Descriptive Adjectives	.1476	.07

Multiple R = .4564

Middle Ability Students

Evaluative Themes

Significant Variables	Correlation	Standard Error
2nd Person Pronouns	.2812	.09
Prepositional Phrases	-.1627	.07

Multiple R = .2492

Descriptive Themes

Significant Variables	Correlation	Standard Error
Prepositional Phrases	-.1268	.04
Noun Verbal Phrases	-.9517	.38
2nd Person Pronoun	.3862	.16

Multiple R = .2696

Low Ability Students

Evaluative Themes

Significant Variables	Correlation	Standard Error
Adverbs	-.8601	.37

Multiple R = .4697

Descriptive Themes

Significant Variables	Correlation	Standard Error
Noun Verbal Phrases	-4.9770	1.114

Multiple R = .6360

to be representative of an entire population, a number of cells in the design - for example, those for the low ability groups - are quite small with membership of less than twenty. Comparison between these and other cells (of as many as 197 subjects) is at best difficult because of the large standard errors associated with the small cells.

Second, the writing samples were collected under very unusual circumstances; students were given only fifteen minutes to write an essay which they knew was going to "some professors" at Northwestern University. Fifteen minutes is clearly too short a time for a student to compose a carefully written essay. The mere pressure of time undoubtedly distorted the students' normal writing habits.

Nevertheless, in spite of these problems in design, the data suggest quite clearly that the third interpretation, that student writing habits are not especially stable, is also possible. Consistent differences between, say, pronoun usage on the evaluative and on the descriptive themes, cannot be dismissed simply as random variance due to poor sampling and poor test administraton techniques. There are, in the data, enough of such clear-cut differences to suggest plainly that student writing varies considerably from one essay to the next, and that usage characteristics are in part dependent upon the subject matter and mode of discourse. Research workers have, in the past, generally operated under the assumption that "writing is writing." Students are asked simply to "write an essay," or if topics have been assigned, they are not clearly defined in the research report and are not considered in the analysis of data.

Clearly, if research into the linguistic characteristics of student writing is to be meaningful, the variable effects, such as the theme topic, must either be filtered out of the data or accounted for in the analysis.

It also appears from this study that breaking students into conventional categories of grade level and ability grouping is of limited value. On two consecutive grade levels, for example, many students may be of almost the same chronological age. The amount of instruction a student has received becomes confused with his "natural," chronological growth patterns. The problem can be avoided, as it was in the LaBrant study, for example, by selecting students at four year intervals, eliminating overlap chronological ages and grade levels.

But in eliminating the overlap, such a study also makes any growth curves or growth patterns discontinuous. The analysis supplies a description of the general characteristics of growth patterns, but with only three or four measurements across a 12 to 16 year span, such patterns are only rough sketches, based on the assumption that growth in writing is linear.

Perhaps the only solution is for the investigator to examine the interaction of specific writing characteristics with a large number of variables, such as grade level or years of schooling, chronological age, and standardized test scores of verbal ability, reading ability, intelligence, and the like. Such analysis of growth would indeed be complicated, resulting in multidimensional growth patterns, but it may indeed be the only realistic solution to the problem.

APPENDIX V

Teaching Composition to Culturally Disadvantaged Elementary School Students

A Report of Research Conducted Jointly
by Northwestern University and
The Chicago Board of Education
August, 1966

Introduction

During the second semester of the 1965-66 school year, Mrs. Osanna Nesper of the Shepard School, was released from her teaching duties one-half time by the Chicago Board of Education to participate in a research project with the Curriculum Center in English, Northwestern University. This is a report of that project.*

Background

Mrs. Nesper has now worked with the Curriculum Center in English for the past two years. During the 1964-65 school year she was released half-time by the Board of Education to prepare a set of teaching materials designed for the so-called "culturally disadvantaged" elementary school children.

Drawing on lessons previously prepared at the Curriculum Center and on her own experience teaching fourth grade at the Shepard School, Mrs. Nesper prepared three units, consisting of 36 two or three day lessons, treating the basic processes of composition. Unit I stresses the use and role of detail in writing, and is designed to help students expand the content of their writing to include significant details and to develop their sensitivity to the needs of the reading audience. Unit II treats sensory details in considerably greater depth, while Unit III, based on a study of children's poetry, emphasizes accurate details and "picturesque" language in communication.

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*In addition to the contribution of released time by the Chicago Board of Education, the Curriculum Center wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the Northwestern University Research Grant Committee which supplied funds for support of the project.

A standard procedure was followed in each of the lessons:

1. A writing model was read to the students. Models include such diverse forms of literature as chapters from children's novels, short stories, nonsense limericks, and poems. In every case, the content of the models was such that students could relate their own experiences and observations to those of the author or the central character.

2. The vocabulary of the piece was discussed to eliminate lexical barriers to comprehension.

3. The model was reviewed by teacher and students to insure that the students thoroughly understood the story, plot, and main ideas.

4. The model was examined by the class to see how the author had used details in reporting his experience. At this stage the students concentrated on seeing both the kinds of observations made by the author and how he communicated them through the use of detail.

5. The students were encouraged to write compositions about similar situations they had experienced, drawing on their understanding of the author's use of details to develop their own writing.

During the early stages of Unit I, compositions were written by the class as a whole, with a class secretary recording suggested sentences on the board and the class selecting and rejecting various components of the story. Later in Unit I, and throughout Units II and III, students were encouraged, but not forced, to write by themselves, drawing freely on the advice of their teacher and classmates. (As a matter of fact, after two or three weeks of group writing, a few students, on their own volition, wrote papers at home, which they brought to school for the teacher to read.)

All four aspects of communication--reading, listening, speaking, and writing--are involved before a lesson is completed. The presentation of the model and vocabulary discussion stimulate the pupil's awareness of language; the closer examination of the model during the period of questions and answers about the content and the descriptions unleashes the pupil's ideas.

The emphasis on vocabulary, which is necessary for the children's understanding of the story, also becomes valuable to them when they are writing their compositions. Mrs. Nesper found that her students had wanted to communicate ideas they had, but lacked enough words to be as specific as they wanted to be. Early in the course of the lessons, the students became concerned about the readers of their papers--would the reader understand what they meant? It was during the vocabulary sessions that children learned to use the dictionary and to put definitions into their own words.

The discussion periods are a vital part of the lessons, being concerned with the heart of the writing process. Children have ideas, but need time to synthesize them. As individuals discuss their particular experiences, others begin to recall their own. Often the words used by one pupil in telling about his experiences can set off some kind of chain reaction among the listeners.

Activities During the 1965-1966 School Year

Mrs. Nesper was released from her teaching duties one-half time during the second semester of the 1965-1966 school year to conduct a fairly formal examination of the effectiveness of the lessons in the classroom. The lessons were taught by a number of teachers in four District 19 elementary schools. Participating schools, principals, and teachers included:

Chalmers School:	Miss Devine, Principal Mr. Gallegos, grade 5 Mrs. Newman, grade 5
Johnson School:	Mrs. La Palermo, Principal Mr. Ball, grade 5 Mr. Freelon, grade 5
Howland School:	Mr. Rosen, Principal Mr. Hooks, grade 4 Mr. Moffett, grade 4
Shepard School:	Mrs. Becvar, Principal Mr. Agrimonte, grade 5 Miss Mendak, grade 4 Miss Moran, grade 4 Mr. Bilandre, grade 5

Teachers were supplied with copies of the lessons and sufficient copies of the writing models for all of their students. Mrs. Nesper visited the participating teachers approximately once each week to discuss the progress, and to gather suggestions for improvement of the lessons.

Evaluative Comments of Participating Teachers

Perhaps the most valuable results from the project came from informal discussion with the teachers. Such comments cannot be easily quantified, but the reactions of the teachers to the lessons can be summarized in five major points:

1. The lessons encouraged the students to experiment freely with language and communication. Because of the emphasis on seeing and writing, rather than on forcing students to use "standard" English forms or certain prescribed manuscript forms and conventions, and because of the emphasis on voluntary writing and self-expression, the students felt free to "test things out"--to experiment with language structures and phrases to see which ways of expression would communicate effectively.

2. The students were made more aware of the world around them through the use of literary models. By observing the characteristics of professional models and then writing their own compositions along similar lines, students became more concerned about observing things around them. They also came to realize that the "stuff" of literature is experiences quite like their own.

3. The ability to use the forms of standard English was developed without drill. Interestingly enough, although students were given no drill in grammar, usage, and punctuation, they developed an interest in them through study of the writing models. They came to realize the value of the standard conventions in communication without going through drill and without having errors red-pencilled on their papers.

4. Students developed a stronger interest in reading as a result of studying models in detail. In many cases, teachers reported that students voluntarily read a number of the books from which models were selected. Reading grade level appears to have been improved throughout the use of the lessons, experimental grade four classes were 1.00 years above control classes which did not use the lessons, experimental grade five classes were 8.85 months higher than control classes.

5. The teachers found the lessons useful as model lesson plans. Most commercially published textbooks provide little assistance to the teacher in planning lessons and seldom offer a rationale for their procedures. Mrs. Nesper's lessons include anecdotes about her experiences teaching composition to fourth graders, attempt to anticipate difficulties likely to be encountered by the teacher, and explain the rationale behind each lesson in detail. Thus they provide more assistance to the teacher than traditional materials.

Results of the Analysis of Student Writing

Measuring growth in writing is very difficult because of the complexity of prose and the problem of establishing realistic standards of evaluation. The College Entrance Examination Board, for example, struggled with the problem for years and finally "solved" it by not grading writing samples at all, simply mailing copies to schools designated by the candidate. Initially, we had hoped to conduct this project under a formal experimental design, including experimental and control groups and evaluating compositions on a quantitative scale, and at the beginning and end of the project, collected writing samples prepared under experimental conditions. But measuring writing skill for the fourth and fifth graders in this project presented even more than the usual problems because, in many cases, students could not write a complete sentence, much less a complete paragraph, at the beginning of the experiment. Quantitative measures could not be applied because there was simply nothing to measure. Clearly fluency, the number of words written for the test, would be one legitimate criterion of student growth. But because it tells us little about the quality of a student's expression, it is hardly satisfactory as a single criterion of growth.

We therefore decided that instead of attempting to apply quantitative measures to the papers that several members of the Curriculum Center Staff would simply examine a number of the pre- and post-test writing samples and attempt to describe the kinds of changes which took place.

We have reproduced several sets of pre- and post-test writing samples from both the experimental and control groups below. For both tests the students were read a passage from Roosevelt Grady, by Louisa R. Shotwell. The passage described Roosevelt's first day at school. After discussion of the passage, the students were asked to comment on any similar experiences they might have had. The pre-test was administered on February 4, 1966, the post-test on June 13, 1966. (The statisticians inform us that the same test can be administered twice without fear of the "practice effect" if the testings are separated by at least four months). Names of teachers and schools have been removed from the essays, but the student spelling, punctuation, etc. have not been corrected.

First we will present two sets of papers from the control classes written by students who did not study under the experimental lessons. In addition to showing the "usual" growth patterns for students in the participating schools, these papers will supply a norm to which the papers from experimental classes can be compared.

Set #1

Pre-test

I have not bend to summer school. The story was about Roseavel. Nothing happen to me like Roseavel. Yes am tired of doing the same thing.

Post-test

I have never been to summer School. And i never trancefered to another School. My experience was wash dishes and pots. And to mob the floor and that was all for me.

--Eddie Brown

Eddie's two papers rather completely summarize the difficulties which most of the students in the participating schools have when faced with writing a composition. His chief problem is that he simply has nothing to say. He doesn't elaborate on his statements; he doesn't, for example, tell the reader why he hasn't gone to summer school, what he does do in the summers, what the things that he is tired of doing are (the questions in the test were phrased in such a way that elaboration of this sort was quite possible.) In his post-test, he does personalize his writing a bit, adding the details that his experiences do include washing the dishes and pots, but he lacks a sense of audience. He never allows the audience to fully understand what happened. Where did this kitchen drudgery take place? Under what circumstances? How do these details relate to the general topic of the essays?

A second problem is that Eddie is not at home in the written medium. His sentences don't conform to standard English, appearing to be almost literal transcriptions of his speech. Note, for example, the verb forms in the sentences, "Nothing happen to me like Roosevelt," and "My experience was wash dishes and pots," both of which are fairly common in the spoken dialect and communicate successfully there, but which are not "correct" in writing.

Set #2

Pre-test

I went to summer school last summer. I liked the Children very much. I liked the teacher very much too. But I didn't like doing the same thing over, and over again. So I was brave enough to ask her to let the class do something different.

Post-test

When I went to summer shcool I felt very brave. I felt that the children were very nice. The teacher was very nice. She took us on trips almost every day. She had black hair and kind of slim legs. Every day she would give us some free milk.

--Eva Townsend

Eva clearly has more facility with the forms of written English than Eddie. She also has a good deal more to report. But in many respects her two papers reflect some of the same writing problems that Eddie seemed to encounter. While she wrote a bit more than he did, she still hasn't very much to say. Note, for example, her frequent use of the evaluative labels "very good" and "very nice," labels which actually communicate very little. Why did she like the children and the teacher? What was she doing over and over that she did not enjoy? Was she successful in persuading the teacher to let the class do something different? In the post-test, of course, Eva makes some progress in supplying answers to these questions. The teacher was "nice" because she took the students on trips, gave away milk, and apparently, was good looking. But even in the post-test, Eva leaves the reader on the outside, without a truly complete picture of the situation. We never come to see precisely what summer school was like, and we never learn in detail what Eva enjoyed in it.

Both Eddie and Eva thus appear to have made at least some slight progress in writing during the year, although quantification of that progress is difficult. We will present, for comparison, five sets of themes written by students in the experimental classes. As was the case with the control group themes, we have selected samples which we feel are representative of the group as a whole.

Set #1

Pre-Test

When I came to Mr. _____s Room

When I came to Mr. ______s Rooms I was very happy. I like Mr. ______ very well. I like all the boy and all gril. Mr. ______ is very nise to us. Mr. ______ have a very nise room. I live this room.

Post-test

When I came to _____ School

When I came to _____ School I thought that I was not going to fight. I had came that day, So 3 weeks later I had a fight with Rodney. We were fighting almost all day. But Mr. _____ stopped us. He made us shake hands. So we shaked hands. So me and Rodney were friends all the time we were together.

--Raymond Roberts

Clearly Raymond has not become an accomplished writer as a result of the program, but the changes in his writing do seem rather remarkable. First, it is clear that Raymond has become a little more fluent; his post-test writing sample is considerably longer than the pre-test. Where the pre-test is a loose collection of general statements (the 6 sentences can be placed in practically any order without affecting the communication) the post-test is a complete, though short, story, progressing chronologically from beginning to end. But perhaps most important is that the post-test really seems to be an expression of Raymond, of his problems during the early days of the school year, while the pre-test is a collection of statements calculated (consciously or unconsciously) to gain the approval (or at least to avoid raising the wrath of) the adult world. Perhaps Raymond really did like everything about his early weeks of the school year, but as the post-test suggests, there were some difficulties, too. After writing compositions for four months, being encouraged to write about his own difficulties and problems, Raymond has made considerable progress toward learningggg g to express himself.

Set #2

Pre-test

The first time I came to School

The first time I came to this School I was in Mrs. ______'s room. it was near Valentine So Mrs. ______ gave us a party. I stade until two weeks. I wanted to Stay here but I had to move and go to another School. called _____ School. My mother moved again and I came back to this School and was in fourth grade. My teacher's name was Mr. ______.

Post-test

The Birthday Party

One day my family and I went to a party. My cousins were there. I didn't know all my cousins because I didn't see them in a long time. Then the children started to dance. I was afraid to dance. Then the grownups started playing cards. My cousins took us to the park. Then we played baseball. I hit the ball so far that I made a home run. The girls were trying to beat the boys. But do you know who won? The boys won the girls were so mad that they told there monther to take them home. But my family and I stayed. We did "Cleo's back"! Then they said I was the best dancer. We stayed from four o'clock to ten o'clock. we went home and went to bed.

--Joann Jones

Like Raymond, Joann has become more fluent; her post-test is twice as long as the pre-test. Particularly interesting is the way in which Joann's writing has expanded. Her pre-test essay is simply a collection of facts, a series of events reported without comment. What happened at the Valentine party? What did Joann do? How did she feel about leaving after two weeks? How did she feel about returning? The pre-test essay does not say. But in describing the birthday party, Joann adds a number of details about the party itself and about her reaction to it. We learn that she didn't know her cousins very well, that she was afraid to dance, that she and the girls were angry at losing the ball game. She tells us about her accomplishments--she hit a home run and was named the best dancer. In short, Joann, like Raymond, has opened up to the reader; she tells her story with a much greater degree of fullness than she did at the beginning of the project.

Set #3

Pre-test

Roosevelt problem was about Subtraction. My problem is about penmanship. Why don't we do penmanship sometime? We doon stop doing penmanship. I would like to do penmanship. When we start doing penmanship I will be glad. I like to do penmanship. Because penmanship you can finish faster.

Post-test

I remember when I first came to the other school. I didn't want to do reading and spelling all the time. When we go in a new book, my teacher would say, "Now we are in a new book and we will start on new contenet." Some times, The class would laugh at me. Because I did Some silly things. Some times I would laugh at them. Because they did Some silly things. When ever we said a bad word she would make use apologize to the class. When we were bad, she made use write "I must always be polite in school." Then I went to her desk and said, "Mrs. _____ could we do Arithmetic now?" she said "yes. And tomorrow we will do it."

--Robert Phillips

Again we can see a considerable increase in fluency. In the pre-test, Robert has a single message to deliver, "Why don't we do penmanship sometime?" After he states his point, he has nothing left to do but repeat it three or four more times without much variation. He seems at a loss to find something to say, so that the pre-test seems to be a cross between a message to the teacher and a monologue taking place within himself. (Interestingly enough, Robert's penmanship did improve considerably between February and June. Perhaps he succeeded in getting his message to the teacher.)

In the post-test, while not choosing to write much of a story, Robert does a fairly complete job of characterizing his class. Note that he does not give just a single example of events in the room, but supplies the reader with a number of details and specific incidents.

Also interesting in the post-test is his use of quotation marks. In the manuscript copy a number of erased quotation marks and commas are still visible; it is apparent that while writing the story, Robert experimented some with these punctuation marks, inserting quotation marks and then deciding that they were not appropriate and removing them. He was successful in his experimentation; the quotes are placed correctly. (Teachers did not offer any assistance to the students during the testing, so that we can be certain that Robert himself made the final decision.)

Set #4

Pre-test

When I went to Miss _____ room. I had a worderful time wher I life I fell sorry I want to see her she was so nice to me and now I want to see her Whien I do I am gonig to be happy when I see her.

Post-test

When I went to school - Unture story

I went down South so see my dad. When he came back I was in kinagarge. I was smart so they put me in secund gard. I was smart in that room to. I did not want to stay in three gard and now in for grad and passing to 5th I hope.

--Phyllis Johnson

Phyllis did not seem to improve particularly in her use of personalizing details and the like; indeed, we really learn more about her from the pre-test essay, where she clearly communicates her unhappiness about leaving a teacher than we do in the "Unture story" of the post-test. But it is interesting to note Phyllis's syntactic growth. At the beginning of the project she pretty clearly had no concept of "sentence;" she simply strung words, phrases, and clauses together until she had finished what she had to say, at which point she inserted terminal punctuation. In the post-test, she seems to have acquired the concept. Her first four sentences are complete and correct. The fifth returns to the run-on form, but it is important to add that in the manuscript copy, Phyllis's handwriting degenerates into a scrawl in that sentence, implying that perhaps she was rushed by the time limitation or that her interest wandered. Clearly, at any rate, she has in the course of the year learned how to write complete sentences.

Set #5

Pre-test

When I first came to this school I was a cry baby. I was in first Grad. I have a good teacher. in my room I dety no any one. I just no a boy and girl. In forth grad Mr. _____ was my teacher.

Post-test

When I fought

One Day when I was walking down the street, I saw a boy with blue shirt and black pantes and brown sox and Black shoes. He walked up to me and asked me do I want to fight. I said yes and so we started to fight. I hit him in the nose. He hit me in the mouthe and I hit him in the Jaw and he said thats enough. And then I said no! and then We started back hitting each other, Back fighting, I hit him in the Jaw, he hit me in the nose. And then my mother was walking down the street. So I pushed him behind the bushes. When my mother was next to me I jump in the bushes where Mike was. I tried to wake him up but he was dead asleep. And suddenly

> my mother tripped over a rock. And fell in the bushes. She saw Mike. I got behind the other bushes, and hid from her and so she couldn't see me. Suddenly she saw my feet and told me to come out.
>
> --Freddie Davis

At this point, Freddie's essay hardly requires much comment. He is obviously not a sophisticated writer of prose, but he surely has become a prolific one. The post-test essay presents quite a different picture of Freddie than the pre-test, with its sketch of a shy, unhappy boy who didn't know anyone in first grade.

The papers which we have presented here are, we feel, representative of the kind of progress which students in the project made. Not all of the students did as well as the five whose work is discussed here; many students wrote no more or no better in the post-test than they did in the pre-test. But we feel that on the whole, the lesson materials have proven to be effective in helping culturally disadvantaged elementary children improve their writing, particularly since instruction took place for a very short four and one-half month period. It seems apparent that given further study under materials of the sort written by Mrs. Nesper, these students could make great progress in improving their communications skills.

APPENDIX VI

A Report of Research Conducted Jointly
by Northwestern University and the
Oak Park Junior High School
Language Arts Curriculum Committee
March, 1967

Introduction

Since 1962, the Curriculum Center in English at Northwestern University has been preparing materials for the teaching of English Composition under a grant from the U. S. Office of Education (Project English). During part of the same period, Professor Wallace W. Douglas, Director of the Center, has served as a consultant to the junior high school Language Arts Curriculum Committee of Oak Park. During the 1965-1966 school year, the Committee agreed to assist in the testing of Northwestern lesson materials prepared for the seventh grade by supplying a number of experimental and control classes for use in a formal research plan. This is a report of that project.*

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*The Curriculum Center wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Northwestern's Research Grant Committee which supplied funds for many of the expenses incurred in the project.

The Center also wishes to acknowledge the aid of Dr. Lewis Grell, at that time chairman of the Committee, and the teachers who participated in the project: Mrs. Katherine Andrews (Holmes), Mrs. Caroline Webb (Lincoln), Miss Franklean Wegersen (Beye), Mrs. Carol Whiston (Longfellow), Mrs. Tamarah Warden (Mann), and Mrs. Barbara Driggs (Hawthorne).

Design

Six teachers participated in the project, of whom three were arbitrarily selected to teach the experimental materials; the remaining three used their classes as control groups. In total twelve classes were involved, six each in the experimental and control groups, creating populations of 146 experimental students and 131 control. The distribution of the sample is summarized in Table I of the Appendix.

Early in the fall all students were administered one of two equivalent forms of a descriptive writing test. Instructions for the writing sample were read by the teacher; an array of objects (chalk, pencil, book, ruler, etc.) was placed in a prescribed pattern on the teacher's desk, and the students were given thirty minutes to write an essay "using enough detail that a person who has not seen the objects could lay out a similar set himself." The forms of the tests differed only in the objects included in the display: similar sets of objects were used for each form, and were arranged in the same pattern.

After this pre-test sample had been collected, the teachers of the experimental classes were given a brief description of the lessons, but little formal training or instruction in the use of them, and were supplied with sufficient copies of the materials involved to teach them to their classes. Control teachers taught composition "as usual", using textbooks as the base of instruction. The Northwestern materials concentrate on teaching the processes of composition, helping students to see, gather, and shape materials, while the "traditional approach" (the term is not used as a pejorative) focuses primarily on the structure and form of completed pieces. Nevertheless, comparison of the experimental and control groups does seem reasonable, given the fact that both approaches concentrate primarily on narrative and descriptive writing, the usual point of emphasis in elementary and junior high school composition.

In the spring of 1966, the post-test was administered, each student writing on the alternate form of the examination from the one he had taken in the fall.

From the entire population a stratified random sample of fifty students was selected, twenty-five each from experimental and control groups, with roughly equal numbers of students who had taken the two sequences (A-B and B-A) of the examination forms. The sample essays, totaling 100, were evaluated by a team of two theme readers, both of whom were English teachers, and were graded in five categories using a scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high):

I. Organization and structure.

II. Locational details--details which locate the objects precisely on the desk.

III. Classifying details--details regarding shape, size, color, and possibly weight of the objects.

IV. Individualizing details--details which set an object apart from other items in its class; i.e. a dog-eared dictionary, a partly-used pencil.

V. Sentence structure--the depth and complexity of sentences.

Reader reliabilities were calculated on double readings of all 100 essays in the sample, and ranged from .6528 to .7786, with four of the five above .7 (c.f. Table II).

Results and Conclusions

The scores given by the two readers were summed, giving each variable a range of 2 to 10. The data were submitted to analysis of covariance, which compensates for pre-test differences between groups and determines the significance of any treatment effect registered in the post-test scores.

For three of the variables, I., Organization, II., Locational Details, and V., Sentence Structure, no significant difference between the control and experimental groups was registered. For two other variables, III., Classifying Details, and IV., Individualizing Details, there was a significant experimental treatment effect well beyond the .01 level of significance. The mean score on Classifying Details for the experimental group increased .72 from pre-test to post-test, versus .16 for the control group. For Individualizing Details, the experimental group increased 2.00 and the control group .44. Thus the results seem moderately favorable to the experimental treatment.

They are not, however, sufficiently persuasive that one would want to reject or accept either program unequivocally. There is always, in experiments of this sort, the danger of encountering the Hawthorne effect, "extra effort" if you will, on the part of the experimental teacher and students, who, given a set of materials known to be "experimental", perform at an abnormally high level. One would suspect, however, that such an effect would be minimal in a project of this sort, simply because it extended over seven months, and it is difficult for any person to remain "psyched up" for that length of time.

A second potential hazard in interpreting these results involves the measuring instrument itself. In spite of numerous attempts by researchers to bring "objectivity" into the measurement of writing ability, any instrument which proposes to separate good compositions from bad or finds certain kinds of linguistic growth desirable, rests on subjective grounds, on the taste of the person creating the instrument. Some people, for example, would evaluate a composition on the basis of whether or not it is error free, or on whether or not paragraphs contain topic sentences and conclusions. We feel that such matters are relatively unimportant, that they are spurious marks of writing ability, and as a result, we ignored them in creating our grading instrument. But it must be acknowledged that the debate exists, and other experimenters might dismiss our variables as worthless and select an entirely different set.

Finally, it is not clear from the data why change took place. Both method and material variables are involved in the lessons, and to a large extent these are inseparable. The lessons, for example, follow a pattern of having students read a model and look for the ways in which the author has made his meaning clear through the use of description. The traditional approach to composition involves stating or discovering rules for the construction of discourse, mastery of which is tested through writing practice. Thurs the experimental and control groups were not only looking for different things, they were following different patterns of searching, and we cannot be certain whether it was the search pattern, the object of the hunt, or some combination which accounted for the differences noted.

The chief conclusion that we can draw is that more research is needed, specifically longitudinal studies of the effects of various materials, coupled with a more complex design which would enable us to pin down the effects of specific method and material variables. Nevertheless, even considering the problems in this design, it is clear that "something was happening" in the experimental class. Given the fact that the acquisition of language still is a lifetime process, while this experiment was conducted over a very short seven month span, these results seem encouraging.

TABLE I

Distribution of Sample

Experimental Group

School	Number of Classes	Students
Holmes	2	53
Lincoln	3	45
Beye	2	48
		146

Control Group

School	Number of Classes	Students
Longfellow	2	42
Mann	2	44
Hawthorne	2	45
		131

TABLE II
Reader Reliabilities

Variable	Reliability
1. Organization	.6528
2. Locational Details	.7748
3. Classifying Details	.7786
4. Individualizing Details	.7692
5. Sentence Structure	.7129

TABLE III

Variable	Group	Pre-test	Post-test	Change Score	Adjusted Post-test Mean	SE Post-test Means	F
I. Organization	Exp.	3.52	4.04	+ .52	3.99	.2822	.081Y
	Cont.	3.28	3.84	+ .56	3.88		
II. Locational Details	Exp.	4.16	4.72	+ .56	4.72	.3360	.133Y
	Cont.	3.36	4.40	+1.04	4.40		
III. Classifying Details	Exp.	6.20	6.92	+ .72	6.64	.2929	7.708**
	Cont.	5.04	5.20	+ .16	5.47		
IV. Individualizing Details	Exp.	4.04	6.04	+2.00	6.01	.3972	14.342**
	Cont.	3.40	3.84	+ .44	3.86		
V. Sentence Structure	Exp.	3.48	3.88	+ .40	3.82	.2784	.438Y
	Cont.	3.20	4.04	+1.16	4.09		

* significant p .05 Y - not significant
** significant p .01 x - post-test means adjusted for pre-test difference

APPENDIX VII

Teaching Composition in the Secondary School: A Report of Research Conducted by Northwestern University and The Chicago Board of Education

January, 1967

Introduction

During the 1965-1966 school year, Mrs. Rita E. Hansen of Taft High School was released from her teaching duties one-half time by the Chicago Board of Education to participate in a research project with the Curriculum Center in English, Northwestern University. This is a report of the project.*

Background

Mrs. Hansen has been associated with the Curriculum Center in English since 1964. During the 1964-1965 school year, she was released half-time by the Board to serve as a Research Associate at the Center. During the year she read widely on the teaching of English, especially the teaching of composition, and, working with the regular staff of the Center, she assisted in mapping out a curriculum in English for the secondary schools. In addition she developed and wrote a series of lessons designed for high school freshmen.

During the 1965-1966 school year the Board of Education assigned Mrs. Hansen one-half time to the Center to participate in a project to evaluate the effectiveness of those lessons.

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* In addition to the contribution of released time by the Chicago Board of Education, the Curriculum Center wishes to acknowledge the support of the Northwestern Research Grant Committee for this project.

Design

The population for the study was the "regular" and "honors" English classes of the Norwood Park Branch of Taft High School, a total of some 365 freshman students. In the fall of 1965 all students were administered one of two equivalent forms of a descriptive writing test under controlled conditions. Teachers placed a collection of objects on their desks; then read the test instructions to the students. Instructions called for the students to write a description of the array, using sufficient detail that a person who had not seen it could construct a similar display on the basis of the description. The two forms of the test varied only in the nature of the objects placed on the desk; i.e., where Form A required the students to describe an array containing a pencil, pad of paper, dictionary, etc., Form B included chalk instead of the pencil, a note book instead of a pad, and a textbook instead of the dictionary.

The classes were then separated by ability groups, creating two independent experiments, and experimental and control treatments were assigned. Scheduling difficulties did not allow assignment of treatments on a random basis, but the pre-test scores suggest that classes were sufficiently "equal" that comparisons could be made legitimately (cf. Tables III a-c). The final distribution of classes is shown in Table I.

During the six months following the pre-test, the experimental classes studied two units in composition prepared at the Center, a selection of introductory lessons in the basic processes of composition, and a unit on reporting. The control classes studied composition as outlined in the curriculum guide of the Chicago Board of Education. There was, of course, some difference in treatments due to the fact that the two curricula have somewhat different aims and thus different content. However, both curricula aim at introducing the students to the "fundamentals" of writing, and both are aimed largely at teaching narration and description, so that comparison seems possible. In order to minimize any Hawthorne effect which might be generated because the teachers of experimental classes were working with "new" materials, Mrs. Hansen and members of the Center staff tried to visit both control and experimental teachers at equal intervals.

In the spring of 1966 the alternate post-test forms of the descriptive writing test was administered. Fifty students from the honors and fifty from regular classes, twenty five each from experimental and control groups, were selected at random to have their papers graded. The pre-test and post-test essays from each student in the sample were evaluated by two high school English teachers following a ten page evaluation guide. The examiners weighed the papers according to five criteria, using a scale of one (low) to five (high):

1. Organization and Structure

2. Locational Details (the ability of the student to give the reader "directions" for locating the objects.)

3. Classifying Details (fundamental descriptions of size, shape, color, etc.)

4. Individualizing Details (characteristics of objects which set them off from similar ones; i.e., a dog-eared dictionary, a half-used pencil, a dirty notebook)

5. Sentence Structure (the depth and complexity of sentences)

Reader reliabilities for the two judges were generally satisfactory, with a low of .62, but with four of the five ranging between .72 and .78 (Table II).

The scores of the two readers were summed, giving each variable a range of two to ten, and experimental and control group differences were determined by analysis of covariance, which compensates for pre-test differences by adjusting post-test means.

Results

In the honors sections two of the criteria showed a significant experimental treatment effect at the .01 level. In the use of both classifying and individualizing details, the honors students improved considerably more than their peers in the control classes. For a third criterion, organization, experimental treatment effects approached the .05 level of significance. This is perhaps indicative that the experimental treatment was producing a real effect, but cannot be regarded as significant. For two other criteria, sentence structure and locational details, there was minimal difference between groups. In the regular classes, no between group differences appeared(Tables III a-c).

Interpretation

The statistical results, while "favoring" the experimental treatment somewhat, fail to supply enough information that one would want to accept or reject either approach to composition unequivocally. The results from the honors classes do seem to suggest that the experimental program was having results, but it must be pointed out that it is possible the differences were a result of teacher and student attitudes toward experimental materials; i.e., the Hawthorne effect. There seems to the experimentor to be no way of determining whether this effect was significant. The only possible solution would be to retest in several years, after both experimental and control teachers and classes had begun to regard the experimental situation as normal.

Because the honors classes showed more positive results than the regular groups, one might be tempted to suggest that the materials are better suited to high ability students. This, however, would seem a premature conclusion; the project was conducted over a relatively short period of time and high ability students are, presumably, quicker to master new concepts than the average students. Thus one possible explanation for the better performance of the honors students is that the project was not run long enough to achieve results in the regular classes.

Indeed, one of the major "conclusions" that must be drawn from the experiment is that such projects probably need to be conducted for longer periods of time. One does not become a "writer" overnight; six months seems a terribly short time to expect measurable differences in writing skill to develop.

TABLE I

Distribution of Sample

Honors Classes	No. of Classes	Total Population	Sample
Experimental	3	66	25
Control	3	58	25

Regular Classes	No. of Classes	Total Population	Sample
Experimental	6	138	25
Control	7	193	25

TABLE II

Reader Reliabilities

	Variable	Reliability*
I.	Organization	.7277
II.	Locational Details	.7816
III.	Classifying Details	.7665
IV.	Individualizing Details	.7214
V.	Sentence Structure	.6533

* Reliabilities are based on the evaluation of the entire two hundred papers from both regular and honors, experimental and control classes by two readers. The scores which they assigned were summed for the analysis of co-variance.

TABLE III a

Variable I: Organization

	Pre-test Means	Post-test Means	Change Score	Adjusted Post-test Means X	Standard Error (Post-test Means)	F
Honors						
Experimental	3.64	4.88	+1.24	4.88	.2962	2.955Y
Control	3.64	4.16	+ .52	4.16		
Regular						
Experimental	3.20	3.20	.00	3.15	.2825	.055Y
Control	2.80	3.64	+ .84	3.69		

Variable II: Locational Details

	Pre-test Means	Post-test Means	Change Score	Adjusted Post-test Means X	Standard Error (Post-test Means)	F
Honors						
Experimental	5.60	4.84	- .66	4.66	.3252	.803Y
Control	4.40	4.92	+ .52	5.09		
Regular						
Experimental	3.84	3.60	- .24	3.562	.2256	.055Y
Control	3.32	3.60	+ .38	3.63		

* Significant, $P < .05$
** Significant, $P < .01$
Y Not significant
X Post-test means adjusted to compensate for pre-test differences

TABLE III b

Variable III: Classifying Details

	Pre-test Means	Post-test Means	Change Score	Adjusted Post-test Means X	Standard Error (Post-test Means)	F
Honors						
Experimental	5.88	6.36	+ .48	6.40	.2847	** 10.042
Control	5.44	5.16	- .28	5.11		
Regular						
Experimental	5.36	5.76	+ .40	5.75	.3340	2.502Y
Control	5.04	5.00	- .04	5.00		

Variable IV: Individualizing Details

	Pre-test Means	Post-test Means	Change Score	Adjusted Post-test Means X	Standard Error (Post-test Means)	F
Honors						
Experimental	3.76	5.28	+1.52	5.26	.2867	** 13.562
Control	3.96	3.76	- .20	3.77		
Regular						
Experimental	3.84	2.96	+ .12	2.96	.2209	.210Y
Control	2.92	3.12	+ .20	3.11		

* Significant, $P < .05$
** Significant, $P < .01$
Y Not significant
X Post-test means adjusted to compensate for pre-test differences

TABLE III c

Variable V: Sentence Structure

	Pre-test Means	Post-test Means	Change Score	Adjusted Post-test Means X	Standard Error (Post-test Means)	F
Honors						
Experimental	3.40	3.64	+ .24	3.62	.2698	.0244Y
Control	3.56	3.80	+ .24	3.81		
Regular						
Experimental	3.56	4.04	+ .48	3.95	.2248	1.163Y
Control	2.84	3.48	+ .64	3.56		

* Significant, $P < .05$
** Significant, $P < .01$
Y Not significant
X Post-test means adjusted to compensate for pre-test differences

APPENDIX VIII

Evanston Township High School Grammar Project
Minutes of Evaluation Meetings
February 16 and 17, 1966

Minutes of the February 16, 1966, Meeting of the English Department

The meeting was called to order by Clarence Hach, Chairman, who welcomed several guests, among whom was Dr. Geraldine LaRocque, former English teacher at E.T.H.S., who has recently received her Ph.D. at Stanford University and who is now teaching at Teachers College, Columbia, members of the District 65 Articulation Committee, Miss Jean Brouillette, elementary supervisor, Mrs. Evelyn Schmidt, primary teacher at Lincolnwood, Mrs. Lorraine Morton, chairman of the English Department at Nichols and chairman of English in District 65, and representatives from the Combined Studies Department.

The meeting was held in conjunction with Dr. James Sledd's visit on February 16 and 17 concerning the teaching of language in general and the experimental linguistics program for freshman English which has been in operation this year. Mr. Hach introduced a panel made up of the teachers involved in the program and using the new linguistics materials in their classes, Mrs. Pannwitt, Mrs. Ladd, and Miss Jahant. Six freshman English classes are involved in this experimental program: two 1 English lower average sections and one H section under Mrs. Ladd; two sections of 1 English H under Miss Jahant; and one section of 1 English G (better average) under Mrs. Pannwitt. The present linguistics program is part of a four-year program planned in the summer of 1964 in a language workshop conducted by Dr. Sledd. The school year of 1964-65 and the summer of 1965 were given to further planning of the program, which was introduced in the six freshman classes in September. Mr. Hach noted that it is hoped that the present program can be expanded next year (1966-67) to include many more freshman classes with the help of funds allegated by the U. S. Office of Education.

The first speaker on the panel was Mrs. Pannwitt, who introduced her remarks with the statement that generative transformational grammar proceeds from the central fact that language is made up of sounds uttered or written to convey meaning and that each user of language fashions it in an entirely unique way. No one, she pointed out emphatically, has ever constructed a full generative grammar for the English language or any other language or is likely to do so; however, it is certainly possible to attempt the teaching of it and to change students' attitudes toward their language through a sequential course of study such as has been proposed for E.T.H.S.

Mrs. Pannwitt believes further that attitudes towards the writing of composition might also be changed through this new approach towards linguistics. Of course, literature appreciation skills have not been ignored because the program schedule has allowed for the full range of literature selections: biography, drama, novels, poetry, short stories, mythology, and book reports. Mrs. Pannwitt regrets that the three teachers did not operate as a team, although they did confer in several informal meetings. It was difficult, however, to achieve any feeling of working as a team since there were no conference periods and their free periods did not coincide, so that true interaction was impossible to attain. Mrs. Pannwitt felt that the outstanding purposes of the program were to eradicate prejudices in matters of usage of people who use dialects other than the prevailing one and to erase misconceptions about language in general by showing what it does and how it works. By causing students to realize how grammar fits into the scheme of things and giving them an opportunity to describe the characterestics of language by using a set of hypothetical working rules, we will succeed in our goal of making students sensitive to what language is, how it evolved, and why it changes.

Miss Jahant, the next member of the panel to speak, stated that her part of the language program concerned the units on lexicography, or use of the dictionary, and lexicology, or word study. One of the most important results of the study of the dictionary, using exercises which were not based on the most recent edition of Webster's, was that the underlying principles function accurately and universally for any dictionary that might be employed, not only for an isolated edition. She believes that students found that the dictionary is a useful source for finding not only derivations but the process of vocabulary changes, such as narrowing, broadening, and elevation, and that while the dictionary is an excellent recorder of language, it is not an authority on it. As a source of knowledge, such as etymology, standard pronunciation, part of speech and meaning, the dictionary is reliable and informative, but it cannot, for instance, specify a perfectly respectable dialect pronunciation of a word as it would be intoned in Boston or the deep South. In the matter of affixation study, Miss Jahant felt that concentration in this area provided a vehicle for student proficiency in the use of a Latinate vocabulary and an apparatus for easy recognition of the parts of speech. The students use their intuitive knowledge of grammar to fit words into a derivational frame such as "The ------ seems good (bad)." Sample words to consider would be *create* and *creation*, *conversation* and *converse*, and *deify* and *deity*. Students also realize that the addition of different suffixes changes meaning as well as the part of speech. Although it is shown that prefixes have force in themselves to alter meaning, they are used mostly to help in vocabulary building and to show students how consistently they are attached to English learned words. Miss Jahant noted that the unit needs expansion into more extensive exercises and the addition of a section on using larger dictionaries. She finished with the opinion that her students have become interested in words for their own sake and that the fine response she has received indicates that the part of the program with which she worked has been a notable success with pleasing results.

Mrs. Ladd began her presentation with a "sales pitch" for a new book, *Transformational Grammar and the Teacher of English* by Owen Thomas, for those who are interested in digesting "Chomsky without tears." Mr. Hach noted that copies of this book should be available at Chandler's shortly. Mrs. Ladd emphasized that the materials included in the linguistics proposal were subject to constant revision and reexamination because the actual "warm body" approach was so different from the "dry run" method used to evolve the exercises. Students often grasped concepts more slowly or much faster than was originally conjectured, and more or less time was therefore spent on various ideas. It was emphasized that the implementation of the exercises would have been impossible without Dr. Sledd's grammar containing the formulations of the transforms that might be presented in a ninth grade unit in the study of language. Dr. Sledd wrote two versions of the grammar, a semi-symbolic version which appeals to students who enjoy the abstract terminology of math, and a "plain English" version stating the same rules in ordinary language. However, it was pointed out that all the words necessary to describe a verb phrase, for example, can be economically put into a formula:

$$\text{VP} \rightarrow \frac{\qquad\quad (\text{do})}{(\text{modal})\ (\text{have})\ \ (\text{be})} + \text{Main Verb.}$$

Many combinations are therefore possible using the "power and elegance," as Chomsky describes economy of expression, of such a formulation. Mrs. Ladd noted that students must be constantly reassured that they can be creative because they do know a great deal of grammar and should put it to use. This was proved to them by working with oversimplified and traditional exercises and proceeding to more sophisticated material as students' confidence was built up. Once they were certain of their competence in using grammar to construct and expand sentences, formulations and transformations were manipulated with great aplomb and sensitivity to appropriate length. Language as a system was brought home by presenting nonsense sentences which were then transformed into acceptable sentences by replacing words, adding inflectional endings and applying phrase structure rules. "The daggles riddle in the rastic," for example, was quickly changed to "The squirrels scamper through the grass" and "Zever the oomphong!" to "Kill the umpire!" Much emphasis was placed on noun behavior with classification and subclassification taking place from abstract and concrete to human and nonhuman and inimate and inanimate. Students learned that by combining the main verb with some form of be, a modal, or a participle, very subtle time slot differentiations could be achieved, that subclassifications of verbs such as linking verbs and transitive verbs impose certain restrictions on the sentences in which they appear, and that certain kinds of complements can be used with certain verbs and not with others. Most important is that we cause students to make their own formulations after they have arrived at their own generalizations through discovery procedures acquired by doing the exercises. Not all will arrive at generalizations at the same rate, but they will, hopefully, all eventually grasp the processes of rearranging, changing, adding, combining, and deleting until they are able to generalize and formulate on their own. By taking a sentence such as "I know the boy" and ending up with "I know the little boy who lives in the big red house on the corner," students are able to come to some conclusions about the order and system in their language. Mrs. Ladd concluded with the remark that while students initially become confused because they lack the reassurance of definite rules, such as "Never begin a sentence with a conjunction" or "Never end a sentence with a preposition," they do become more aware of their language, more word sensitive, and very often quite intrigued with the use of language as an orderly system.

Mr. Hach noted that he was very proud of the achievements of the teachers involved in the experimental program as evidenced by the excellence of the material presented in the proposal and by the results that have been reported in the freshman experimental classes this year. Tomorrow's meeting will give Dr. Sledd a chance to comment on his observations and findings concerning thekprogram as it is being handled now, our plans for sophomores, juniors and seniors, and the teaching of language in general. The meeting was closed.

Respectfully submitted by B. Jones

Minutes of February 17, 1966, Meeting of the English Department

The meeting was called to order by Clarence Hach, chairman, who welcomed several guests.

Dr. James Sledd, the department's consultant from the University of Texas, was then introduced to present his observations and conclusions concerning our new language program. Dr. Sledd began his remarks by saying that after being as "detached, critical, objective, and objectionable" as possible during his visit, he must frankly admit that he has not encountered in any high school anything to match the quality of the performance given by Mrs. Pannwitt, Mrs. Ladd, and Miss Jahant in their panel at the meeting of February 16. He added that the presentation was so superb that if the salient points and purposes of the language program were not made perfectly clear, he certainly could not think of any more effective means of doing so. Dr. Sledd noted that the English Department at ETHS has distinguished itself chiefly because the language program has been planned and actually created by the school itself, whereas in most systems the program has been "imposed from above" after materials and curricula had been engendered elsewhere. Teachers in Portland, Oregon, for example, use a grammar which they did not write themselves but one which was prepared for them by the University of Oregon. Our having done the job ourselves constitutes a substantial advantage over the school that has received materials on a second-hand basis. Besides the achievement of a pure act of creativity, we should have considerably more insights into our limitations and capabilities as a result of an entirely original production.

After reviewing the initial proposal for the language program last year and comparing it with the folder of materials presented by the panel, Dr. Sledd felt that a very great deal of progress had been made. Several important gains were noted: the first was that never again would we have to face the dreadful experience of staying one step ahead of the students and occasionally watching them pass us up because of inadequately developed materials and superficial preparation. The program is becoming well established now, and we should feel more confident and at home with it. There is also the gain of having several excellent new publications on the subject of the new-grammar such as Owen Thomas' Transformational Grammar and the Teacher of English, which was referred to also at yesterday's meeting.

Another significant gain is that there is considerably more interest in the program now than previously, perhaps "not always an affectionate interest," but nevertheless an active energetic awareness has been generated not only on the part of the children but the parents as well. National developments have also indicated that the program is not just a "fine madness," but definitely at the center of things. Even the MLA, Dr. Sledd noted, has become conscious of the new trends and has awakened to its possibilities, and this development is as impressive a proof of the accepted integrity of the program as can be offered. The question has arisen as to whether a completely integrated curriculum would combine and interact. Dr. Sledd felt that any "strenuous effort at an artificial integration of these subjects" would bring only superficial and inadequate results and that relationships should be allowed to emerge, not be forced.

ETHS will pay certain prices for its creative urges; the questions will begin bombarding us from all sides; we will be "exposed to public view"; there will be no refuge from the merciless analyses of critics and assorted observers, but in a sense these are the tests of a great high school. There is no doubt, Dr. Sledd remarked, that we have a much clearer view of the problems involved, which seem to fall into these central areas: 1. Many schools often make the mistake of presenting "too little too late or too much too soon." There are several institutes around the country with instructors pontificating with great authority about the new methods and procedures when they have had little or no experience teaching in the high school at all. If the new grammar is to be developed successfully, restraint and care must be exercised in the choice of the teachers who will present it. Dr. Sledd felt that we are "incredibly fortunate in having a fine staff made up of competent, willing, confident, and well-prepared teachers," so that the language program is in as good hands as it should be everywhere. 2. There is a major problem concerning the materials and publications that are being developed even though the increased activity is providing teachers with more effective and authoritative sources. Caution must be exercised in the examination of the wealth of printed material in order to identify the "skillful popularizer who can make evil look virtuous." Though such writers make a big splash with impressive productions, their basic tenets minus the gleam and glitter are harmful and destructive. 3. Work on a "new grammar" was begun in the 1920's by George Lyman Kittredge and others and revitalized by Noam Chomsky, whose major productions on the subject, though as close in time as 1957 and 1965, are a world removed from one another. It is impossible to assume that any definitive finalized version of the new grammar has yet been published. Tests, methods, exercises, formulations must be subject to constant review and revision. Modifications and changes must continually take place even though the cost both in money and human labor will be high. 4. A careful balance must be maintained between the new and the old. Our previous standards must not be allowed to be diminished to make way for the experimental spirit. Dr. Sledd felt that in the case of ETHS, the "minor miracle seems to have been passed" in this regard; no serious damage seems to have been done to the valuable programs in literature and composition which have weathered the tests of time and tradition. 5. The matter of articulation is always a problem, but Dr. Sledd was pleased to see people from Districts 65 and 202 conferring with one another with interest and vitality about the teaching of language on the primary, elementary and high school levels. It is wonderful, he added to see "the left hand knowing what the right hand is doing." 6. We must preserve the attitude toward the program as being experimental and subject to complete or partial failure. We must not prejudge our success; if we do so, the resulting errors are likely to be compounded. 7. For which students will the new program work? It is felt by Dr. Sledd that it may well be successfully taught to students on lower levels than the H and G classes, but more experimentation will be necessary in the future to determine how far down the line it will prove effective.

Dr. Sledd reiterated his satisfaction with the success of the introduction of our language program this year, noting that though grammar at ETHS may well be described as "frenetic and wild," it will never again be called dull. During his experience of conducting some of the G and H freshman classes, Dr. Sledd observed a high degree of eager interest on the part of the students, their agility in handling language, and their perceptive, intelligently-formulated questions.

Dr. Sledd can envision no serious problems in introducing the other branches of the program on the upper levels, particularly since teachers are familiar with the study of words and the history of the language. It is unthinkable, Dr. Sledd has found, to continue to confine literature and language to the contributions of Great Britain and the United States. Enormous problems are being presented to students of dialectology since regional dialects are vanishing and social dialects are changing so radically. In the matter of lexicography and usage, emphasis should be placed on the increasing interest of the oridnary citizen, who, it has been found, is perfectly capable of becoming very excited and involved in what should be and should not be included in a dictionary. As far as grammar is concerned, Noam Chomsky's "twelve-cylinder" brain has done more to revive and invigorate English grammar than anyone else in this century. Furthermore, Dr. Sledd stated, it is simply not true that transformational grammar "turns its back" on the traditional grammar we were all brought up on. Chomsky's genius is of the type that "is good enough to see the significance of our grammatical tradition and at the same time good enough to ask questions that will lead beyond the tradition." In fact, for the person who is thoroughly embued with the spirit of traditional grammar, there is the obligation to examine the extensions of it and to educate himself in the principles which Chomsky has established. Dr. Sledd here noted that perhaps it is we who are being tested and not the concepts of the new grammar. If we fail to recognize the meanings inherent in it, we are guilty of turning our backs on the very tradition we are defending; it constitutes a "refusal of intellectual light."

Dr. Sledd then asked the meeting for questions and comments. Miss Weiss inquired as to what exact sorts of questions were asked of Dr. Sledd during his visits to the classrooms. Dr. Sledd gave the example of the boy who asked, during a discussion of the determiner a, whether the word would be used to specify "which ball broke the window" or "how many balls broke the window," since a is both an indefinite article and a word of specification derived from the Anglo-Saxon word ān meaning one. Another student wanted to know why, in addition to the three conventional ways of stating a command, "Do close the door," "Don't close the door," and "Don't you close the door," there couldn't be a logical fourth, "Do you close the door." Dr. Sledd answered the student's query by explaining that historically we did have this fourth alternative, but because of a reshuffling of the uses of the word do, which is one of the major syntactic changes in English, the fourth possibility was removed. Dr. Sledd felt that such intensive questioning was an impressive proof that students are amazingly competent in handling and manipulating their language. Mr. Bodycombe expressed concern over the Basic student, who, if he is not involved in the program somewhere, may suffer even more of a sense of isolation than he feels now. Mrs. Griffin stated that her experience with the "lower" low-average students in their study of dialectology showed that they do respond to the routine and the consistency of several general phases of the program. Mrs. Ladd agreed wholeheartedly in this regard, noting that she received many spontaneous comments from students to the effect that dialectology and the study of the dictionary was "fun" and generally more interesting than it had ever been before. She felt certain that many of these people have stanines of 3 or less on verbal and abstract reasoning tests. Mrs. Pannwitt remarked that her G class was the most heterogeneous group she has ever taught and that while some students wanted an even more abstract statement than Dr. Sledd's semi-symbolic version of the grammar, some relied almost entirely on his "plain English" version. The result was that a third, more symbolic grammar was written by those students feeling the need for it. This would seem to indicate that as long as students can develop their own statements and keep them consistent and organized, even the lower ability groups should be able to handle the new grammar. Mrs. McGrew pointed out that it might be advisable to differentiate between what Basic students consider new and fascinating and what they were actually absorbing, since the absence of the conventional fearsome terms and rules might cause them to respond to the novelty without any true understanding. Dr. Sledd returned with the thought that any device that would succeed in interesting students and jolting them out of their customary apathy would be highly acceptable in his opinion. To Mrs. McGrew's question whether the program could be adapted to an emphasis on oral rather than written communication, Dr. Sledd replied that it would be impossible to limit the grammar to an oral presentation, considering that the kind of English which is spoken and which is written are often so entirely different. While the sentence, "They considered the dance to be a failure" is usually agreed by students to be perfectly acceptable when written down, hardly anyone will admit to using it in normal, every-day speech. Mr. Neumann asked whether consideration had been given to a starting point for the new grammar and whether it might be introduced on the elementary level rather than later in high school. To this Dr. Sledd affirmed his strong contention that the program may be begun in the junior high school as soon as there are enough qualified teachers to make it feasible. The Honors students at ETHS have shown that they are able to cover the same material in less time than college students, and pupils in the 6th, 7th, and 8th grades could handle it as well when and if proper teacher training makes it possible. Mrs. Wolf wondered whether the language program has been found to have any application to reading skills. Dr. Sledd said that it has helped students in the study of poetry; for example, figures of speech are discovered to be deliberate departures from established subclassifications of nouns in that animate qualities are given to inanimate objects. Mrs. Kemp asked how much transfer of understanding carries over into composition. Miss Jahant noted that not enough writing has been done in her classes as yet to see any correlation emerging, but that while studying passive transformations, one of her students insisted that she would never use this less effective form in her writing, i.e., "John was hit by Jack" instead of the more commonly used active voice. Investigation of the student's writing folder produced the "happy coincidence" of containing a paper in which so many instances of passive voice were marked that Miss Jahant had made a comment on the paper to the effect that its use was destructive. The result was, Miss Jahant felt, that the student will have absolutely no doubt in the future about identifying and correcting passive voice. To Mrs. Pickett's comment that the transformational method seems to allow for so much inductive learning, Dr. Sledd said that the marvel is that it brings to the consciousness of the child, in an organized and systematic way, what he has known all along about the structure of language. As Chomsky replied when asked to justify the teaching of the new grammar, "The study of our language gives children respect for their own lives." It is an exciting moment of truth for them to become aware that they have, Dr. Sledd noted, "the most marvelous and mysterious equipment in all of animate existence."

Mrs. Hinkel inquired as to when the materials in the folder presented by the panel at yesterday's meeting will become available for expansion and use by other teachers in the department, for instance during this summer's session for the educationally deprived. Mr. Hach stated that the folders may be checked out at any time in the English office and that their contents are certainly open to adaptation and use by all department members.

The meeting was closed by Mr. Hach with appreciative thanks to Dr. Sledd for his efforts in behalf of the new language program at ETHS and with an expression of hope that as much or more progress may be reported a year from now as has been made since its inception in the fall of 1965.

Respectfully submitted by B. Jones

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ABSTRACT

A report of the course of events at the Northwestern Curriculum Center. The report documents the complexities of the relationships between schools and universities that have been created as a result of the establishment of the curriculum centers under Project English. The report describes the development of hypotheses about the nature of "composition" and techniques for teaching it. The research at the Center is described.

The report indicates in some detail the theory on which the work of the Center has been based. This theory is that school writing is an important means of growth in language, that to achieve satisfaction from writing children must want to write and must have confidence in their writing; that their confidence can be encouraged if they are helped in understanding how to think concretely and specifically, and if they are given some knowledge of the stages of the writing process, especially of those that go on before and as a necessary preliminary to "writing-down." Insofar as having something positive to do in teaching composition will change the attitudes of teachers toward student writing, these techniques should lead children toward writing-confidence.

The theoretical hunches are supported by evidence from observation and testimony, and also from research, though the latter is very tentative.